WILLIAM MURRAY: BOOKS ARE BURNING

THE Nation

May 2, 1953
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Ike's First 100 Days

Report and Appraisal

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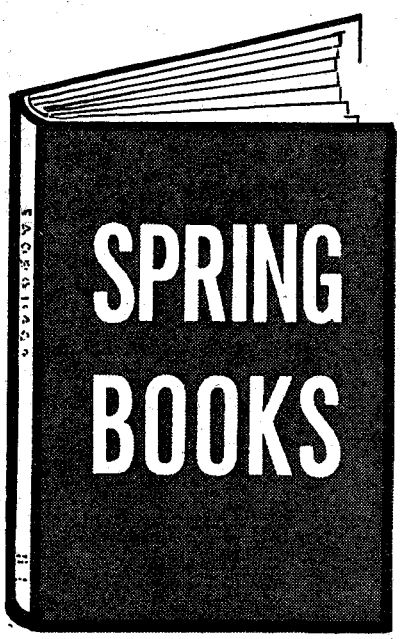

Ray Bradbury on Science Fiction

James Jones, William Styron,
Maude Hutchins, Leonard Bishop,
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Six Authors in Search . . .

Maxwell Geismar on Henry James

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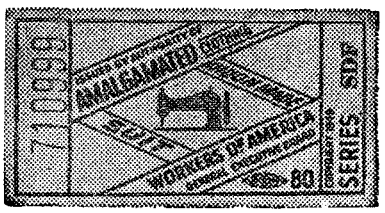

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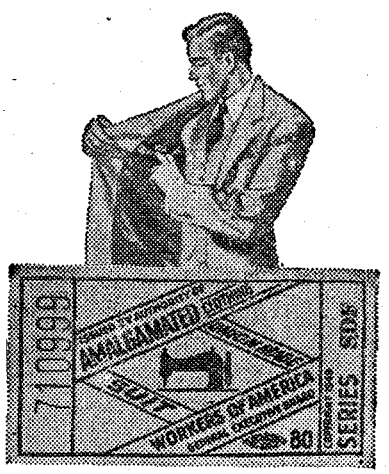

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THE Nation
EVERY WEEK SINCE 1865

EDITORIALS

The Shape of Things

NATO and the Stretch-out

At Paris last week the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization formally agreed to maintain its "posture of strength": nothing had been changed by recent Soviet overtures. Verbally, the exhortations of Mr. Dulles were echoed by all his European colleagues at the Palais de Chaillot. But as indicated by "deeds rather than words" a quite different state of mind prevailed. The armaments stretch-out decided upon at the session reflected a definite lessening of apprehension. (It also reflected, of course, the Eisenhower economy program—but this stems from the same thing.) One can be sure that if the famous showdown last set for 1954 were still seriously expected, the planned strength of the NATO army for that year would not have been cut by twenty-six or twenty-eight divisions. The new program calling for a long-haul increase of strength but the scrapping of emergency measures, obviously makes sense; it also contains numerous political meanings yet to be explored.

For one thing, it suggests that Mr. Dulles's threatening language and the more unrealistic of President Eisenhower's peace conditions may represent tactics rather than fixed policy. In any case, the Russians, while rejecting most of the peace conditions recently set forth by the American leaders and staking out a few claims of their own, printed the Eisenhower speech in full and repeated in *Pravda* their readiness to proceed to "business-like discussion of disputed issues." No doubt they too look to deeds for assurance, and the NATO stretch-out decision offset a good many "tough" words.

Germany's Play for Power

But if Russia's peace maneuvers exercised an unacknowledged influence at Paris, so did the growing doubt over the future of the European army. When Chancellor Adenauer reached home after his Washington visit, with American promises of aid and friendship in his hand, his stock rose very high. Already it is dropping. The vote in the Bundesrat, delaying action on the E. D. C. treaty until the international situation becomes clearer, was a sharp blow to his plans. It indicated not only reluctance to commit Germany to a tight military alliance with the West—thus challenging Moscow at its most sensitive point—but also the hope that a serious reunification offer by Russia might make the whole plan unnecessary. And as long as the pacts are hung up in Bonn, the NATO program will remain in a state of uncertainty. For German integration is a price Western Europe will pay only if Russian aggression seems likely and fairly imminent. Even the hint that some other solution for Germany may be possible played its part in last week's slowdown at Paris.

What Western Europe, and especially France, wants is a plan that will minimize the threat of German armed power and industrial dominance. Today the rise of German industrial strength, largely on American dollars, is the most startling and significant fact this side of the Soviet Union.

R. H. S. Crossman, in a recent issue of the *New Statesman and Nation,* reports Dr. Brentano, leader of the Adenauer forces in the Bundstag, as proclaiming in a public meeting that "whatever the Russians propose, integration with the West must proceed; every form of neutralization must be excluded, and the claim for the lost provinces east of the Oder must be fully maintained." What this means is all too clear: in a very short time Germany, its arms industry rebuilt (also with dollars), would dominate the alliance of which it became a part and would be able to gear the policy of the West to its own aims in the East. The one thing that could prevent all this would be a settlement between the West and Moscow. No wonder Dr. Adenauer regards the idea with such distaste.

Baloney at the Waldorf

Baloney was not on the menu at the annual Associated Press luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 20, but Secretary of the Treasury George M. Humphrey's speech was full of it. To reassure his listeners Mr. Humphrey took the position that "talk of a truce" or "even an actual truce" would not have an early important influence on the rate of military spending; we must first achieve a "proper permanent posture of defense," a phrase left

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undefined. Then "readjustments" might be necessary, "sometimes to the advantage or detriment of one group and sometimes to another." "Sound currency" and "reduction of taxes" were offered as the best substitutes for government spending. Defined, this means deflation. Mr. Humphrey also called for "a radical revision of our tax system,"—a phrase which the Alsops obligingly defined later in the week. "Secretary Humphrey," they wrote, "is reliably reported to favor a uniform national sales tax."

The Secretary believes that such a financial "readjustment" would increase the incentive to invest. But any venture capital created in this manner would be likely to go to "underdeveloped areas" overseas, where "underdeveloped" wage rates promise higher returns than at home. Finally, echoing the President's statement, Mr. Humphrey suggested that "a substantial percentage" of any savings achieved by disarmament should be used for world aid and reconstruction. Since the government, however, has promised to reduce expenditures all along the line, it is difficult to see how this can be done. Just as Mr. Dulles was unprepared to cope with the Soviet diplomatic "peace" offensive, so Mr. Humphrey appears unprepared to cope with the economic consequences of even a protracted lull in the shooting war.

The Counter-Evolution

This is not a "do nothing" Administration; it is an "undo everything" Administration. A basic political philosophy which has been in slow evolution in this country since the days of McKinley is in process of reversal. Government is going to bat, not for the consumer, but for the producer; not for small business, but for big; not for low tariffs, but for high; not for public housing, but for banks and insurance companies; not for public power, but for private utilities; not for social security, but for the dole; not for civil-service expansion, but for the spoils system; not for price controls, but for profit guaranties; not for the worker, but for the employer. The counter-evolution extends beyond our land borders to the oil under the sea and down into the earth to affect our mines. Who will get the first C. A. B. license for lunar travel—Juan Trippe?

The retrogression is most clearly seen in the Administration appointments. We recommend careful reading of Mr. Catton's article in this issue. New items are reported daily: Parke M. Banta of Missouri, who in the Eighteth Congress voted to take 750,000 people off social security, becomes counsel to the new Health, Education, and Welfare Department; Jerome K. Kuykendall, long a private-utilities lawyer, is recommended as a Federal Power Commissioner.

In retrospect, Eisenhower's greatest domestic accomplishment during his first hundred days as President has been to make Taft seem like a man of the center.

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Joe McCarthy's Scummy Snoopers

Senator McCarthy's junior investigators returned from their fast and furious European junket pouting but far from contrite. Seldom has more damage been done the prestige of our government in so short a time. Long before the two young men arrived in London, the British press had given them the drubbing they so richly deserved. "Scummy snoopers," "distempered jackals," jeered the *Financial Times;* "Will McCarthy Men Look Over B. B. C?" headlined the *Daily Express.* "Positively Mister Cohn, absolutely Mister Schine," and "Let McCarthy's two precocious youngsters see everything they want to see," wrote A. J. Cummings in the *New Chronicle.* "Let them be made familiar with the British hatred of bullying honest officials to serve the ulterior purpose of a fanatic in authority." Indeed, the British press was all set to have a go at "the bobbsey twins," but they arrived in London frightened and evasive and barricaded themselves in the American embassy. At the airport, however, British reporters managed to shoot one good question at them before they enplaned for home: "Don't you think that your investigations and activities are very little different from those employed by countries to whose political ideas we are opposed?" Their answer was: "There is nothing wrong in our activities at all. They are pursuant to a legislative act."

New Address For THE NATION

Beginning Friday, May 1, *The Nation* and the Nation Associates will be established in new permanent offices at 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. The telephone number will be CHelsea 2-8400.

IKE'S FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT came to office twenty years ago last March; the first three months of his Administration were known as the "First Hundred Days." The value of much that he accomplished during that period has been hotly disputed, but one thing even his bitterest foes acknowledge—he gave Congress and the country dramatic and compelling leadership.

What has Eisenhower given Congress and the country in his *first hundred days?*

Associated Press Wirephoto

I. FOREIGN POLICY

by Arnold T. Sloane

THE terrific punch which the Eisenhower Administration was to inject into America's foreign policy now looks like a shadow-boxer's feint. Remember those fiery if irresponsible projects, so recently born and already laid to rest—the plan to "liberate" peoples from the Elbe to the Sea of Japan, the phantom naval blockade that was to force Communist China to its knees, and the sizzling repudiation of those Yalta agreements? Gone, all gone. As so often happens, the new management has had to acknowledge that glib opposition is one thing and the responsibility of power another. When a man moves into the White House and switches on the light, he sees the imponderables of geography and natural resources in all their nakedness.

It is hard even to survey United States relations with other countries when you have to keep glancing at the knife Joe McCarthy brandishes behind your back. John Foster Dulles had a sensible notion when he became Secretary of State. It was to leave administrative routine to his subordinates and with intervals for meditation stroke in new policies on the great canvas of the changing world. In planning his procedure Dulles forgot the men in Congress who are so impatient to usurp his conduct of foreign policy. Their interventions have proved a far more formidable distraction than the daily tasks of departmental administration.

Dulles's plan to guide America in world affairs from an Olympian peak has evaporated. First there was the McCarthy committee's assault on the State Department's Voice of America. Then came the unrelenting pressure, still continuing, to purge the department of independent thinkers and to intimidate the rest. Scarcely had Dulles caught his breath from the latest tussle when he was thrown head first into the McCarthy-led struggle over Charles Bohlen's confirmation as ambassador to Moscow. As if all this were not enough, he had to contend with the affair of McCarthy and the Greek shipowners.

This harassment, plus constant calls to appear before Congressional commit-

ARNOLD T. SLOANE is the pseudonym of a close observer of American foreign policy.

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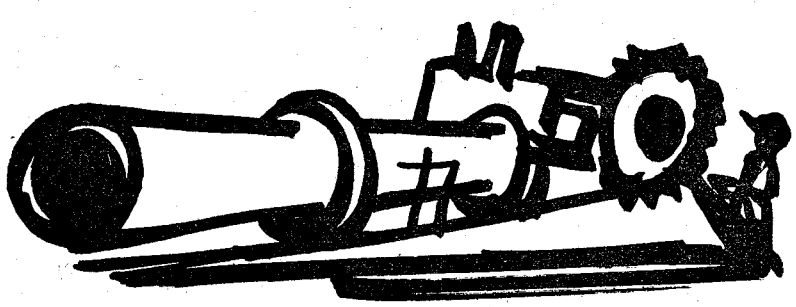
tees, left the Secretary of State precious little time for the meditative shaping of foreign policy. What skipper goes in for yogi exercises while his ship is foundering? But far worse than these distractions was the hopeless attempt to evolve enlightened policies that would be acceptable to the unenlightened but powerful band of Asia Firsters, get-toughies, and other fanatics on Capitol Hill. His own and President Eisenhower's decision to buy peace at any price from their foes in Congress crippled the new Administration's direction of foreign policy even within the small room for maneuver permitted by the imponderables of contemporary history. What happened, then, in the first hundred days or so?

AT THE START we were told that our Far Eastern policy was to be zipped up, that we were going to give Western Europe a big heave toward unity, that we would end the nonsense in the Middle East which was blocking that region's integration in our strategic plans. One of the new Secretary's early pronouncements amounted to a threat to curtail United States aid to its European allies unless they moved rapidly toward federation and translated the European-army project from paper to actual divisions in the field. Dulles then set forth on a swing around Europe, on which he devoted much of his time to extinguishing the Europeans' flare of resentment at what they considered his essay in blackmail. Even the subsequent parade of Eden, Butler, Mayer, Bidault, and Adenauer to Washington left the European Defense Community wrapped in uncertainty. Nor was the Eisenhower Administration able to conceive an adequate alternative.

In reviewing our Far Eastern policy the Administration considered various courses. It weighed a new offensive in Korea and recoiled from the cost in lives and money and from the big question-mark hovering over military success. It contemplated a naval blockade of the China coast and, mainly owing to grave doubts whether a majority of the United Nations could be won for such an adventure, shelved it. What finally emerged was the fatuous "wraps off Formosa" decision and a noncommittal French-American joint communiqué which said in effect: if the Communists take advantage of a Korean armistice to commit aggression elsewhere in the Far East, the United States and French governments will reserve their freedom of action.

The Eisenhower Administration, as had been foreseen, did shift the emphasis somewhat from Europe to the Far East. Dulles indicated that American aid to Europe would be reduced and aid to East Asia increased. The Administration was ready to pour still more money—perhaps $700,000,000 instead of $400,000,000 a year—into the war in Indo-China. Eisenhower and Dulles, more than Truman and Acheson ever did, have regarded the Korea-Indo-China-Formosa-Malaya campaigns as parts of a single struggle against the Communist opponent.

IN HIS CHOICE of men to represent the country abroad the President followed the standard pattern. The new ambassadors are the usual collection of wealthy business men who were helpful during the campaign and career diplomats. The most disconcerting turn in that field was the retirement of George Kennan from our foreign service. Stalin's insistence on Kennan's recall from Moscow last year was a piece of dismal Soviet stupidity. Those acquainted with the reports Kennan was sending home from Moscow knew he was an influence for moderation, courageous enough to warn his chiefs in Washington of the consequences of ringing the Soviet Union with air bases and rebuilding West Germany's military might. By dropping Kennan the Administration deprived itself of one of its most knowledgeable aids in Russian affairs.



Perhaps most barren of all is the Administration's world-trade policy. For two years one foreign government after another has been peppering Washington with requests to end commercial discrimination against foreign exporters. In mid-April the general secretary of the Organization for European Economic Recovery, Robert Marjolin, was in Washington, striking a note of urgency concerning Western Europe's lagging economy. For a year, he told the Administration, Western Europe's production had ceased to rise, and France's was even declining. Meanwhile production in the Soviet Union continued to mount, 10 to 15 per cent annually. If the trade-not-aid idea is to be more than just another catch phrase, Marjolin made clear, the entry of foreign goods to American markets must be facilitated.

In at least two speeches since he took office President Eisenhower has proclaimed that our policy was "to stimulate profitable and fair world trade." But when the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, R. A. Butler, came to Washington he learned that the Administration was unable to decide how far, if at all, it could go against America's protectionists. At a moment when Europe regarded its dollar shortage as menacing, Eisenhower created the Lewis Douglas committee and gave it the rest of this year in which to write a report on economic policy—he already has at his disposal three official reports and six others by competent private study groups, all recent and all recommending that our commercial restrictions be liberalized.

IN RESPONSE to Europe's cry of Fire the President asked Congress to prolong until June 12, 1954, the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. On top of all this he appointed an arch-protectionist to the Tariff Commission. And despite Europe's financial plight the United States is preparing to cut its own defense expenditures while pressing the NATO nations to increase theirs. In the middle of these developments Dulles made his celebrated statement to Washington newsmen. The real lesson of that incident has not been generally understood. What Dulles suggested over the steak

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dinner was that while he hoped to end the wars in Korea and Indo-China, he would prefer to keep alive the Chinese civil war between Formosa and the mainland. He admitted that our allies would undoubtedly refuse to join us in backing Chiang Kai-shek; so one might consider, he said, a U. N. trusteeship for Formosa. The problem of Formosa would be sure to be raised if we proposed to redraw the frontier between North and South Korea at the peninsula's narrow waist, for the Communists would make counterclaims—especially concerning Formosa.

To assume that the Communists would accept U. N. guardianship for Formosa—under United States tutelage?—as compensation for yielding the hundreds of square miles they now hold below the waist of Korea is pretty naive. Yet this formula, which the Communists would reject out of hand, struck some obsessed but influential Senators as appeasement of the Reds. Senator Knowland was the first to leap to the telephone, if not to arms, to demand an explanation. Senators Taft and Wiley quickly followed. But Knowland's prompt protests to the President and to Dulles were enough to draw a feeble denial from the White House. The affair showed plainly that the merest hint that we might yield 5 per cent if the Communists yielded 95 per cent mobilized the pack of self-styled anti-appeasers in Congress. It revealed the immense barrier Congress has erected against any move by the Administration to negotiate with the Communist bloc on a give-and-take basis, even if we proceed almost entirely on the basis of "you give and I'll take." A British diplomat concluded, characteristically, that the episode "was not promising."

THE EISENHOWER Administration, as some of its leading members confess, was totally unprepared for the peace overtures from Moscow after Malenkov's rise to power. These Russian advances promise to take the Administration off the hook in Korea. They have suddenly given substance to Eisenhower's campaign pledges. In the first weeks of the new Soviet leadership Washington echoed with the old familiar words about Russia. Dulles at a news conference set forth three reasons why we could not reach an understanding with the Kremlin. The President, more wisely, announced that we would accept the Soviet moves at their face value unless they were proved unworthy of confidence. His words cut straight across the torrent of abusive statements by Senators who insisted we must regard the Russian peace offensive as phony unless it was shown to have some reality.

The new Administration's most significant declaration on foreign policy came in President Eisenhower's April 16 speech to newspaper editors in Washington. Though it lapsed twice into the thesis of campaign days that the Russians must be pushed back to their 1939 frontiers, in general it shunned provocation. It was a cautious but encouraging invitation to Malenkov to answer the definition of American aims with a Soviet counterstatement. It left open all avenues to serious negotiation of a settlement between the Communist and the non-Communist world. It avoided the take-it-or-leave-it approach. The President was obviously presenting America's maximum program; he will hardly have expected Russia to relinquish its control over the satellites the next morning. Many of the ideas Eisenhower put forward were a revival of New Deal–Fair Deal concepts of world affairs: for example, his hint that if arms limitation became possible, America would join with other nations in putting a big part of the money saved into a fund for public works on a world scale.

At the moment, with a Korean armistice in sight, the outlook has perked up. But the really difficult problems must be tackled after a truce in Korea has been achieved, when a Far Eastern and then a German settlement move into the foreground. For these we are ill prepared. The President's latitude to negotiate appears rigidly restricted by a diehard Congress. However, that need not be fatal. Only last November Dean Acheson was opposing India's reasonable resolution in the U. N. for a Korean armistice. One day he discovered that the United States was a minority of one in the United Nations. Thereupon he switched to support of the Indian proposal, ignoring the China Lobby.

Unless the United States now gives evidence of its own good faith, in addition to demanding more proof of Russia's, it may again find itself a lonely wallflower at the U. N. ball. We need not suffer that humiliation if President Eisenhower has the stamina to override not merely the China Lobby but the Congressional majority of obstructionists.

II. DOMESTIC POLICY

by Bruce Catton

Washington

ACCORDING to Holy Writ, the heavens and the earth were created in six days. Remaking them necessarily takes a bit longer, even for a Republican Administration. At the hundred-day mark the Eisenhower Administration is still busy with warming-up pitches.

Yet a pattern has been set, the pattern on which the government is apparently going to operate in the years just ahead. It contains no surprises; in fact, it could have been forecast by anyone who paid close attention to the Republican campaign speeches. The Republican Party in office talks and acts precisely as it did when it was out of office.

To trace the pattern, begin by remembering Sherlock Holmes's inquiry into what the dog did in the night. When he was told that the dog had done nothing in the night, he remarked that that was extremely significant. The very inactivity of the Eisenhower Administration in its first hundred days is significant. Of six thousand bills introduced in Congress during this period, only thirteen have been enacted into law, and of these only one could be considered "major." Here is the clear tip-off that we are not going to have a "strong" President, in the traditional political meaning of the term. Not since Teddy Roosevelt have the Republicans had or wanted a strong President—a President who presents his own clear program and by political acumen and drive prods and

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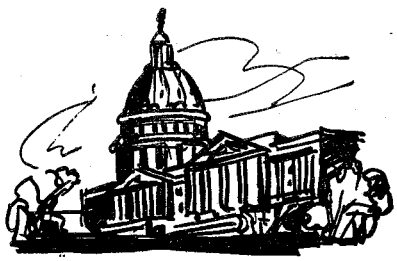
pushes the whole machinery of government until the important parts of the program are put into effect.

I do not mean that there is no program, or that it will not be carried out. I mean that the real power is shifting back to Capitol Hill.

MORE THAN three months after inauguration an Administration that campaigned vigorously for lower taxes and a balanced budget has not yet submitted its budget. Since the start of the new fiscal year is only ten weeks away, Congress is setting out to do the job itself. It is of course doing it piecemeal, subject to innumerable pressures from within and without, blithely deferring expenditures and presenting the result as "savings," struggling as best it can against its very strong desire to cut taxes first and get the budget in balance sometime in the future.

Increasingly, the Senate has asserted control over the executive branch, especially in matters under the jurisdiction of the State Department. The Voice of America is almost wholly at Senator McCarthy's mercy. Important officials have been dropped from the department at Senatorial instigation. When Harold Stassen tried to curb McCarthy's independent operations in the foreign field, the White House pulled the rug out from under his feet within twenty-four hours. Senator Mundt has announced that he and his pals will purge the State Department since Secretary Dulles has failed to weed out the horrible Acheson hold-overs. This interference has been taken with astonishing meekness. The mere fact that confirmation of the Bohlen appointment was finally voted, after McCarthy and his crowd had had a ten-day field day over it, was actually presented as an Administration victory. In a way perhaps it was—at least the executive branch stopped short of complete surrender.

On the question of revising the Taft-Hartley act the White House has to date offered no leadership whatever, despite campaign promises. Instead, the Congressional hearings on the act are drifting along so aimlessly that no legislation at all may result. So far the hearings have served to air the extremely conservative view—abolish the union shop, eliminate nation-wide bargaining, turn as much control as possible back to the states. There is not much chance, as of now, that this reactionary position will be embodied into the law, and that is quite all right with the anti-labor group. The mere demand for a tougher law



tends to offset organized labor's demand for modifications, and as one spokesman for big industry remarked, "Why should we worry about amending the law? All we need to do is enforce it as it is."

The President's demand for extension of social-security coverage has been pretty well smothered by Republican diehards in the House. The same forces are now engaged in blocking the relatively modest slum-clearance program. If stand-by controls against inflation are continued it will not be because the White House fought for them but because Senator Capehart of Indiana, of all people, took up their defense. The farm program remains in the air; apparently no effective effort will be made to redeem the campaign pledge to help "the farmer obtain his full parity, 100 per cent parity, with the guaranty in the price supports of 90 per cent."

To some extent all this is due to very bad liaison between the President and Congress. A good deal has been made of the "get-acquainted" luncheons at the White House, but the fact remains that understanding between the legislative and executive branches is almost non-existent. A common complaint by Republicans on the Hill is that they cannot talk even with the White House assistants who are supposed to handle liaison. It might be noted that one reason for the fight on the Bohlen nomination was the bitter feud between presidential assistant Sherman Adams and Senator Bridges.

Much of the trouble comes from sheer political ineptitude. Senator Taft himself commented on this rather sharply in a recent speech. Seeking to explain why progress in implementing the Republican program had been slow, he said: "Men who have been eminently successful in their own lives have been chosen [for top government jobs], but as far as I know they don't have a single day's experience running a federal government—the biggest institution the world has ever seen." Worse than its political inexperience is the Administration's apparent reluctance to make up its mind about things. President Eisenhower does not dominate, and there is nothing to show that he especially wants to dominate, or that he could if he did want to.

A case in point is the Defense Department's turning down of the low bid offered by a British firm on machinery for an Army Engineers' project. Quick, routine action was called for: either accept the bid as a means of promoting reciprocal trade or reject it in line with the buy-American policy. Instead, the matter dangled for a long time. It was discussed with officials of the Board of Trade in London and with the embassy in Washington. It was discussed at two separate Cabinet meetings. The decision that was finally taken went directly against one of the President's cherished policies.

THE EVIDENCE so far is fairly good that on most matters Congress will call its shots during this Administration. But that is only part of the pattern. It is also apparent that this is going to be one of the most conservative Administrations the country has had in many a year. That the Cabinet should turn out to be a millionaires' club was perhaps only to be expected, but that so many other top-level appointments should go to representatives of the big interests is rather appalling. The Agriculture Department is glittering with processors and traders. The Interior Department is filling up with men who have their doubts about public power and the importance of safeguarding the public domain. The Housing and Home Finance Administration is headed by a vigorous foe of public housing. A prominent lobbyist has been named to the Federal Trade Commission, a strong protectionist to the Tariff Commission. The Office of International Trade is under a Secretary of Commerce known as a high-tariff man, and the new appointee to the Federal Power Commission is not one who will ever frighten the private power interests.

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These men are not there just for window-dressing. What will happen to the farmer, the worker, the consumer, and the taxpayer in the coming years depends only partly on the laws passed by Congress. It depends as much on the administrative and policy-making decisions of high-level appointees. It will be affected, for instance, by such things as the recent rise in interest rates on short-term obligations, the proposed abolition of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the growing tendency to consider the whole business of government lending from a strict banker's viewpoint.

Furthermore, precisely at the time when the extreme conservative wing holds the leadership in Congress, the Administration has been setting the example for a give-away policy in respect to the nation's basic resources. Eisenhower blithely committed himself to the offshore-oil give-away before he even understood it. There followed the Barrett bill, which would in effect give away grazing rights on the public domain via leases in perpetuity; the President's recommendation that government-owned synthetic-rubber plants be sold to private industry; Herbert Hoover's proposal that federal power projects be sold to the power interests; the move to shut down the government's synthetic-liquid-fuel pilot plants and turn the whole operation over to private industry; the proposal that mineral rights in the public domain—properties of incalculable value—be turned over to the states; and, lastly, the rising clamor to dump in industry's all-receptive lap the tremendous industrial potential of atomic energy.

ADD IT UP for yourself: an ultra-conservative Cabinet and Congress, a White House that refuses to exert firm leadership, a set of well-heeled party backers breathing deeply of the Washington air after twenty years in the wilderness. The sheer clumsiness of some of the Administration's leading figures may, to be sure, create stumbling-blocks here and there. Secretary of Commerce Weeks's incredible mishandling of the Bureau of Standards case is the kind of political blunder no Administration can afford to repeat very often. Secretary Dulles's conduct of the State Department already has the press corps speculating quietly about a likely successor. Defense Secretary Wilson's acts have not yet provided any evidence that his opening gambit—what's good for General Motors is good for the country—was a mere fluke. Secretary of Agriculture Benson continues to build up bad relations with the farm bloc.

Perhaps no serious political damage has yet been done. President Eisenhower enjoys the best press relations in memory. How could he help it? The publishers are all on his side. The Presidential press conferences have gone much better than was anticipated; perhaps the one real expert on the White House team is press secretary James Hagerty. But the indecision and the fumbling have not gone unnoticed by the newspaper corps. Of course they can do very little about it, since the overwhelming majority of the men who own and operate newspapers and magazines remain firmly committed to the theory that President Eisenhower is exactly what the country wants and needs. Not many reporters bother to file critical stories because such stories are not acceptable. With this setup the Administration can afford to make a good many mistakes.

EISENHOWER'S "CRUSADERS"

HERE are some typical appointments made by the Eisenhower Administration in vital just-below-Cabinet-level spots:

ALBERT M. COLE, Housing and Home Finance Administrator: a bitter foe of public housing is put in charge of the government's housing program.

JOSEPH E. TALBOTT, member of the Tariff Commission: a high-tariff advocate of the McKinley variety, who feels that the President has too much to say about tariff and trade policy.

EDWARD F. HOWREY, member of the Federal Trade Commission: an able lawyer who has represented big business before the commission for years.

ANCHER NELSON, head of the Rural Electrification Administration: a Minnesota politician who helped draft the farm plank at the last Republican convention and showed strong hostility to loans for power generating plants and transmission lines.

JOHN H. DAVIS, director of Commodity Marketing and Adjustment, Department of Agriculture: an officer from the National Wool Marketing Corporation takes charge of the department's price-support operations, bringing with him a belief that a large part of the job could be handled better by private industry.

DON PAARLBERG, Economic Adviser to the Secretary of Agriculture: a confirmed opponent of farm price supports.

FRED G. AANDAHL, Assistant Secretary of the Interior in charge of water and power: a strong supporter of the states'-right philosophy, favoring a maximum of local ownership and control of public power projects.

FELIX WORMSER, Assistant Secretary of the Interior in charge of mineral resources: another outspoken high-tariff man—as far as lead and zinc are concerned.

ROBERT W. S. MCLEOD, top security officer, State Department: the former administrative assistant to Senator Bridges and good friend of Senator McCarthy gets a key post with Secretary Dulles.

The personnel turnover has extended into what are normally considered civil-service career jobs. Thus Secretary of Commerce Weeks has tried to get rid of the Director of the Bureau of Standards—and may yet succeed; Secretary of the Interior McKay has recommended the dismissal of the directors of the Bureau of Mines, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. The proposed change in the Bureau of Mines has aroused the ire of the formidable John L. Lewis.

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DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Why Science Fiction? . . . *by Ray Bradbury*

THREE years ago I wrote a short novel entitled "The Fire Man" which told the story of a municipal department in the year 1999 that came to your house to *start* fires, instead of to put them out. If your neighbors suspected you of reading a mildly subversive book, or any book at all for that matter, they simply turned in an alarm. The hose-bearing censors then thundered up in their red engines and squirted kerosene on your books, your house, and sometimes on you. Then a match was struck. This short novel was intended as science fiction.

Elsewhere in the narrative I described my Fire Man arriving home after midnight and finding his wife in bed afflicted with two varieties of stupor. She is in a trance, a condition so withdrawn as to resemble catatonia, compounded of equal parts of liquor and a small Seashell thimble-radio tucked in her ear. The Seashell croons and murmurs its music and commercials and private little melodramas for her alone. The room is silent. The husband cannot even try to guess the communion between Seashell and wife. Awakening her is not unlike applying shock to a cataleptic.

I thought I was writing a story of prediction, describing a world that might evolve in four or five decades. But only a month ago, in Beverly Hills one night, a husband and wife passed me, walking their dog. I stood staring after them, absolutely stunned. The woman held in one hand a small cigarette-package-sized radio, its antenna quivering. From this sprang tiny copper wires which ended in a dainty cone plugged into her right ear. There she was, oblivious to man and dog, listening to far winds and whispers and soap-opera cries, sleep-walking,

Ray Bradbury

helped up and down curbs by a husband who might just as well not have been there. This was *not* science fiction. This was a new fact in our changing society.

As you can see, I must start writing very fast indeed about our future world in order to stand still. I thought I had raced ahead of science, predicting the radio-induced semi-catatonic. In the long haul, science pulled abreast, tipped its hat, and fed me the dust. The woman with the radio-thimble crammed in her ear the other night symbolized my failure to count on certain psychological needs which demanded satisfaction earlier than I supposed.

Whether or not my ideas on censorship via the fire department will be old hat by this time next week, I dare not predict. When the wind is right, a faint odor of kerosene is exhaled from Senator McCarthy.

All of the above long prologue leads up to the simple fact that I very much enjoy, I *relish,* writing science fiction.

There is great serious fun for the writer in asking himself: when does an invention stop being a reasonable escape mechanism—for we must all evade the world and its crushing responsibilities at times—and start being a paranoiacally dangerous device? How much of any one such invention is good for a person, bad for a person, fine for this man, fatal to the next?

So much depends, of course, on what the individual *hears* when he gives himself over to the electronic tides breaking on the shore of his Seashell. The voice of conscience and reason? An echo of morality? A new thought? A fresh idea? A morsel of philosophy? Or bias, hatred, fear, prejudice, nightmare, lies, half-truths, and suspicions? Or, perhaps even worse, the sound of one emptiness striking hollowly against yet another and another emptiness; broken at two-minute intervals by a jolly commercial, preferably in rhymed quatrains or couplets?

In writing a science-fiction story around such an idea, the author must consider many things. Is there, for instance, a delicate interplay where the society does not crush the individual but where the individual realizes that without his cooperation society would fly to pieces through the centrifugal force of anarchy? Is the programming on such an ear-button receiver of a caliber to enable a man to be a gyroscope, both taking from and giving to society; beautifully balanced? Does it tell him what to do *every* hour and *every* minute of *every* day? Or, fearing knowledge of any sort, tell him nothing, and spoon-feed him mush? The challenge and the fun come in handling all the above ideas and materials in such a way as to predict how perversely or how well man will use himself, and therefore his mechanical extensions, in the coming time of our lives.

It is both exciting and disconcerting for a writer to discover that man's machines are *indeed* symbols of his own most secret cravings and desires, extra hands put out to touch and reinterpret the world. The machines themselves are empty gloves into which a hand, either cold and excessively bony, or warm, full-fleshed, and gentle, can be inserted. The hand is always the hand of man, and the hand of man can be good or evil, while the gloves themselves remain amoral.

RAY BRADBURY'S science fiction has been acclaimed by many critics as a brilliant contribution to American literature. Among his books are "The Illustrated Man" and, most recently, "The Golden Apples of the Sun."

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The problem of good and evil fascinates, then, especially when it is to be found externalized and purified in the thousands of semi-robots we are using and will use in the coming century. Our atomic knowledge destroys cancer or men. Our airplanes carry passengers or jellied gasoline bombs. The hairline, the human, choice is there. Before us today we see the aluminum and steel and uranium chess pieces which the interested science-fiction writer can hope to move about, trying to guess how man will play out the game.

THIS, I think, should answer why I have more often than not written stories which, for a convenient label, are called science fiction. There are few literary fields, it seems to me, that deal so strikingly with themes that concern us all today; there are few more exciting genres, there are none fresher or so full of continually renewed and renewable concepts.

It is, after all, the fiction of ideas, the fiction where philosophy can be tinkered with, torn apart, and put back together again; it is the fiction of sociology and psychology and history compounded and squared by time. It is the fiction where you may set up and knock down your own political and religious and moral states. It can be a high form of Swiss watch-making. It *can* be poetry. It *has* resulted in some of the greatest writing in our past, from Plato and Lucian to Sir Thomas More and François Rabelais and on down through Jonathan Swift and Johannes Kepler to Poe and Edward Bellamy and George Orwell.

If you try to cram philosophical and sociological theories into the non-science-fiction tale, you more often than not wind up with more crust than filling. It takes a very agile writer indeed to keep a book together under such conditions. But in the story of prediction, at its best, you are given leave to act out your problem in easily stage-managed symbols, in allegories, if you wish. It isn't necessary to stop for long-winded explanations of philosophical or sociological climates. Simply by showing your real characters living and dying against your fresh background, the reader can guess an entire and different world, can feel it come alive through an osmotic literary process which is often exceptionally subtle. Science fiction, then, does one the favor of making outsize images of problems so they can be seen and handled from all sides like those Easter balloons strung along the avenue by Macy's each year.

Over and above everything, the writer in this field has a sense of being confronted by dozens of paths that move among the thousand mirrors of a carnival maze, seeing his society imaged and re-imaged and distorted by the light thrown back at him. Without moving anything but his typewriter, that immensely dependable Time Machine, the writer can take those paths and examine those billion images. Where are we going? Well, first let us see where we've *been*. And let us ask ourselves what we *are* at this very hour. Fortified with this knowledge, nebulous at most, the writer's imagination selects the first path.

Would you like to know how a Communist government might run the United States? A fascist clique? A government of matriarchs? Novels exist covering all these subjects. What if all parents gave over the education of their children entirely to machines? Or if a law was passed forbidding pedestrians in the year 2001? Why travel to the Moon or Mars if we only continue our wars there with Russia or Britain or Africa? Why build rockets at all? For fun? For adventure? Or is this the same process which sends the salmons back upstream year after year to spawn and die—a subliminal urge in mankind to spread, in self-preservation, to the stars? Are we then secretly fearful that one day the sun might freeze and the earth grow cold or the sun explode in a terrific thermal cataclysm and burn down our house of cards? And is all this space-travel talk nothing more than the human race itself seeing to it that it survives when survival means getting off a single, unstable planet and seeding space to its farthest boundaries, where no natural catastrophe, no congealing of sun or passing comet, can destroy man? Is self-preservation, then, our prime mover, and all our speechifying about adventure and fun and a New West in the Sky so much rationalization?

I KNOW I cannot answer the above questions. But I also know I am endlessly fascinated with these questions, minor as they may seem to some, or pompous as they may seem to others. And many, including myself, are having a go at answering them, in the science-fiction field. Here are a few more:

How do you go about converting a group of non-materialist utterly alien Martians to the Methodist conviction? If you find a race of dogs or cows on Venus with I. Q.'s verging on 190, capable of carrying on highly enlightened and logical conversations on social and metaphysical topics, where does this put the Christian faith relative to their dictum that canines and cows do not have souls of transferable value? If these dogs and cows are morally aware and *responsible for their actions,* that is supposedly the test one must pass in order to be credited with a soul. Well, then, one is tempted to ask the Christian religion to point out that exact moment in the history of dogdom and cowdom on Venus when they stopped being brutes

without souls and became equal and perhaps superior to man, thus inheriting the soul as a blessed gift?

I ask these questions both in good humor and in all seriousness. I ask them simply because some time soon they must be answered. The day of the rocket is not so distant that we can delay longer in answering some of them. It will be very embarrassing if we discover on Mars not only that the Adam and Eve legend is the myth we suspected it to be but that Mr. Darwin, too, has been thrown bodily out the window by the things we find on that far world. Science and religion might *both* run in circles, like broken toys, momentarily, confronted with such factual heresy.

Not that we won't be able to adjust to any problems met at home or abroad in the solar system in 1999. We *will* adjust. But I also think our adjustment will derive in part from our practicality

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in both entertaining ourselves with science fiction and looking to our answers now, while still it is afternoon. These problems are human problems, which all too soon will no longer be science-fictional but part of a past history our children will read. I consider none of the above questions improbable or impossible. I consider them very probable and possible indeed.

Consider the similarity of two books —Koestler's "Darkness at Noon," laid in our recent past, and George Orwell's "1984," set in our immediate future. And here *we* are, poised between the two, between a dreadful reality and an unformed terror, trying to make such decisions as will avoid the tyranny of the very far right and the tyranny of the very far left; the two of which can often be seen coalescing into a tyranny pure and simple, with no qualifying adjective in front of it at all.

Space, which is very large indeed, is not the only huge thing which stands before man. Bigness in all its forms towers above us—bigness in religion, bigness in the fields of communication, labor, corporative enterprise, and government. No sooner has the private citizen warded off the millstone wheel of one Juggernaut than another lumbers on stage. Compared to other ages, in which man hid from a single Giant here or a Titan there, we are living, it cannot be denied, in a year when every one of us must stand ready, alone, ax in hand, by the Beanstalk.

Science fiction, it has been suggested, could possibly be the ax which on occasion might hew as much as half an inch of fibrous material from certain Beanstalks. I do not know whether it has ever killed, maimed, or even bruised a Giant. I do not know whether it can be a sling to send the pebble against the brow of Goliath for the millions of Davids alive and put-upon today. I would not dare to say that it is probably the literature of warning or that it might be the dream which can help ward off the nightmare. Too many have claimed too much for science fiction already. And there is no charting agency available to show how much literature goes into the minds and, years later, works down and comes out through the hands of acting individuals.

I know only that there isn't a time, when I've had a really good night's sleep and am clear-headed, that I haven't thought of science fiction and been excited and concerned with its function, minor if you wish, both as fresh entertainment and as morality cloaked in symbol and allegory.

Certainly I have often wished that a new name might be applied to this field, since the old name has grown shopworn in the service of bug-eyed monsters and half-naked space women. But there seems to be no way to avoid that, and new writers coming into the field will have to carry the burden of the old label until someone provides a better one, in this land where everything must *absolutely* have a label.

EVEN AS I FINISH this article, our civilization is thinking about the future and pouring it into molds to harden and become the newer machines which will further prove that, in motion, mankind's ability to externalize his loves and hates, thus more quickly building or destroying his culture, is seemingly inexhaustible. As long as "science fiction" can keep me alert to all this, I'll go on writing it. And I'll go on as long as there is gusto and zest in the writing; for if it should ever become completely and bodily nothing but self-important social and political prediction, I think I would become bored, and my reader bored, too.

I once strongly suspected that fun was the handmaiden, if not the progenitor, of the arts; now I *know* this for certain. And with a great sense of pleasure and personal well-being I intend to

Best of Recent Science Fiction

IF YOU have not yet tried science fiction—or have read it only casually —here is a handy guide to the best that has been published recently. We asked four top men in the field to name six of their favorite new titles. These men were H. L. Gold, editor of *Galaxy;* H. H. Holmes (better known as Anthony Boucher), author and critic; Robert A. Heinlein and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., authors. Not unnaturally, some of the lists overlapped; Alfred Bester's "The Demolished Man" had the unique distinction of appearing on all four. In the combined list which follows, the names of the individual recommenders appear in parentheses. Titles are in alphabetical order and include one or two old ones which have recently been reisssued. The fact that some of our judges named the works of their fellow-judges is purely fortuitous; the lists were prepared independently and no judge knew who the others were.—EDITORS THE NATION.

Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction. By H. G. Wells. Edited by Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas. Little, Brown; McClelland. (Vonnegut)
Flatland. By A. Square (Edwin A. Abbott). Dover. (Holmes)
Golden Apples of the Sun. By Ray Bradbury. Doubleday. (Gold)
Limbo. By Bernard Wolfe. Random House. (Gold)
Martian Chronicles. By Rad Bradbury. Doubleday. (Vonnegut)
1984. By George Orwell. Harcourt, Brace. (Heinlein)
Pebble in the Sky. By Isaac Asimov. Doubleday. (Heinlein)
Player Piano. By Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Scribner's. (Heinlein)
Puppet Masters. By Robert A. Heinlein. Doubleday. (Vonnegut)
Rogue Queen. By L. Sprague de Camp. Fantasy Publishing Company. (Heinlein)
Ring Around the Sun. By Clifford D. Simak. Simon and Schuster. (Gold, Holmes)
Science Fiction Adventures in Dimension. Edited by Groff Conklin. Viking. (Holmes)
Star Science Fiction Stories. Edited by Frederik Pohl. Ballantine Books. (Holmes)
The Demolished Man. By Alfred Bester. Shasta. (Gold, Heinlein, Holmes, Vonnegut)
The Space Merchants. By Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth. Ballantine Books. (Gold, Holmes)
The Worm Ouroboros. By E. R. Eddison. Dutton. (Gold)
Tomorrow the Stars. From Twenty-eight Science Fiction Stories. Edited by Robert A. Heinlein. Doubleday; Dover. (Vonnegut)
What Mad Universe. By Fredric Brown. Dutton. (Heinlein)

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continue in the field for a good many years along with those others who are interested in trying to find a bridge to cross that vast gulf of communication permanently for all of us. I do not know whether tomorrow's street will be full of human beings with Seashell thimble-radios whispering in their ears and all the world and its problems moved away from and neglected. Or whether by some miracle we may all carry supersonic stethoscopes with us on our rounds, so that each may know the sound of every other human heart. I only know that it would be interesting to walk on that street and think about it and write about it, before that evening sun goes down.

BOOKS ARE BURNING

The Spreading Censorship . . *by William Murray*

IN A recent speech in Chicago, Victor Weybright, chairman of the Reprinters' Committee of the American Book Publishers' Council, warned that unless we defend our right to read what we choose, we shall be subjected to a nation-wide censorship that will emasculate our current creative literature and ban many of the classics from our library shelves. "In my opinion," said Mr. Weybright, "the current drive which threatens the widespread availability of books in the United States portends the possible suppression of legitimate scholarship and creative literature in ways unmatched in our time except during the Hitler regime in Germany and, even more overwhelmingly, in Communist Russia." Investigation of recent censorship activity can only lead to the distressing conclusion that Mr. Weybright is not exaggerating. Readers of *The Nation* will not be surprised to learn that this campaign has been planned and organized by the same super-patriots who are undermining our Bill of Rights, attacking the U. N., subverting the Voice of America, and terrorizing our educators.

As Mr. Weybright pointed out, books are still the most important outlet for boldness of thought and imagination. Naturally, therefore, the conformists seek a way of plugging that outlet. Narrow-minded as they may be, we must not underrate them. They fully understand the value of publicity, and they have profited much from the successes achieved in other fields.

WILLIAM MURRAY is a frequent contributor to The Nation.

The campaign for book censorship is led by the Chicago Archdiocese Council of Catholic Men headed by Father Thomas J. Fitzgerald. The council publishes a nationally distributed black list which includes books by winners of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes. It works in close cooperation with local police officers in many parts of the country. Father Fitzgerald has repeatedly recommended the creation of a literary-review board for the publishing industry, headed by a "czar," which would impose self-censorship. The only alternative, he admits, is federal censorship. This, of course, would be a direct violation of the First Amendment's guaranty of freedom of the press. Father Fitzgerald's ideas have received support from McCarthy, Jenner, Velde, various Catholic organizations, the American Legion, and most recently from a Congressional investigating committee on "current pornographic materials" headed by E. C. Gathings of Arkansas.

Until the Gathings committee went to work, the campaign against books was carried on locally rather than nationally. As in the attack on Chaplin and "Limelight," pressure was brought to bear on local distributors and dealers. Often city and state legislation has managed to impose effective if unconstitutional censorship. *The Nation* reported last January on the censorship set up by a city ordinance in St. Cloud, Minnesota, with the result that more than three hundred books are on a banned list to which thirty titles are being added every month. Georgia has a three-man literature commission which is currently rereading Chaucer before deciding whether to ban his works. Sixteen stores in Brooklyn have yielded to the pressure of the Catholic Decent Literature Committee and stopped the sale of 414 publications, including novels by William Faulkner, Budd Schulberg, Nelson Algren, Richard Wright, Willard Motley, Erskine Caldwell, and Irwin Shaw.

There have been public book burnings in North Carolina and Oklahoma. In Youngstown, Ohio, Police Chief Edward J. Allen, Jr., has forced distributors under threat of arrest to remove a number of pocket-sized books from the sales shelves, including Hemingway's "Across the River and into the Trees," Dos Passos's "Forty-second Parallel," and works by Maupassant, D. H. Lawrence, and Somerset Maugham. In Cleveland local police action has banned pocket-sized editions of Sigmund Freud's "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis"—because, according to a local distributor, "it contains a chapter on sex"—and of Apuleius's "The Golden Ass," because "the title of the book might be offensive." An organized drive against books is also under way in Detroit, where police censorship is already in force, and in Manchester, New Hampshire.

In Middlesex County, New Jersey, a local Committee on Objectionable Literature has succeeded in banning twenty-six titles, although the case is now being contested in the courts. The Civil Liberties Union is fighting the passage of so-called "obscenity laws" in New York and Minnesota. A proposed amendment to the New York State Code of Criminal Procedure which

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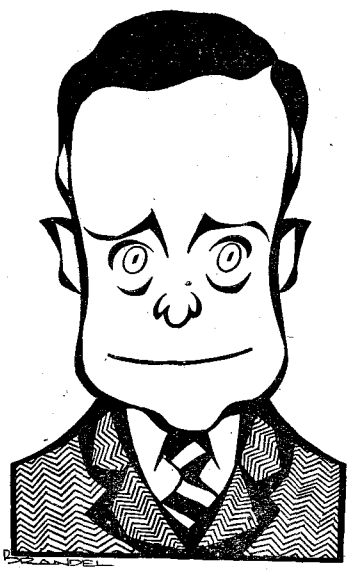
would empower police chiefs and sheriffs to seize "objectionable materials" has already been approved by the legislature and awaits the Governor's signature.

DEPRESSING as these facts are, there was little danger that censorship would become nation-wide until the Gathings committee began to operate last December. After all, we have had books banned before, notably in Boston. Then, too, the attack seemed to be directed not so much at ideas or personalities as at pornography and obscenity. It has been concentrated chiefly on pocket-sized books, which are printed by some ten major publishers and a host of smaller firms. The theme of the reformers has been that children now have easy access to harmful literature which before the rise of the reprint trade was limited to adults willing to spend three or four dollars for a book. The low price and availability of the reprint, the reformers contend, make it imperative that we take action to protect our children from the corrupting influence of such notoriously indecent authors as Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner, not to mention that master of obscenity, Shakespeare.

But they have in mind more than the morals of our children. Some prominent members of Congress would like to limit our right to read for other reasons. One bill has been prepared for presentation to the House which would compel the Librarian of Congress to apply the subversion test to all the books within his jurisdiction. The list of condemned books would then be circulated to other librarians to take what action they wish.

Senator McCarthy would censor not only what Americans read but what Europeans and Asians read. Two arrogant and foolish young men, the Senator's investigators, have been touring libraries maintained by the United States Information Service abroad. One of their complaints has been that not enough copies of the *American Legion Magazine* are available and too many of *The Nation* and the *New Republic*. That ex-Communist and perennial absolutist Louis Budenz, always the first to testify, was quick to assure McCarthy that the State Department distributes books by "at least seventy-five Communist authors" to our overseas libraries. Clearly, freedom of ideas is the issue, not pornography.

The Gathings committee began its investigation by piously claiming that it was concerned with pornography only because "pornography is big business." But on the second page of the committee report is a reference to "content that was believed to be subversive of morals, allegiance, or faith." The report asserts that the reprints "have degenerated into media for the dissemination of artful appeals to sensuality, immorality, filth, perversion, and degeneracy." But as Representatives Celler and Walter point out in their minority report, it "directs unfavorable comment toward ideas themselves contained in cited publications." The majority report attacks "The Haters," a Bantam book, by Theodore Strauss, because "the author was obviously trying to cash in on the Scottsboro



Representative Gathings

pro-Negro agitation which was Communist-inspired." It criticizes "Cage of Darkness," by René Masson, because "the author does not seem to like the 'upper classes' or law-enforcement officers," and condemns "The Harem," by Louis Royer, as advocating polygamy.

Does the Gathings committee want federal censorship? No, says the committee on page 12. Yes, says the committee on page 17, where it urges an "effort by Congress" against the publishers. Past court decisions seem to block effective censorship of books. But this can be remedied, it believes, since Congress can pass new laws which will limit the "liberal conception of the tradition founded upon the constitutional provision guaranteeing the freedom of the press." The report concludes by warning publishers to take self-disciplinary measures or suffer the consequences of the public clamor for more federal action. What public clamor?

Bernard DeVoto points out in the current issue of *Harper's* that the chief danger lies in the fact that the committee intends to abridge the First Amendment and firmly believes that Congress is entitled to do so. "What we may care to read," comments Mr. DeVoto, "is no concern of Congress." He also reminds us that in June, 1949, Representative John S. Wood asked some seventy colleges to submit all their textbooks for examination and approval by the Un-American Activities Committee. That attempt at thought control failed, but the current one stands a better chance of success. The Gathings committee has requested another appropriation to enable it to continue the investigation and will probably get it.

THE REPRINT publishers, of course, are not blameless. Even the major firms resort to provocative illustrations on book jackets. Many of the pocket-sized books are trashy novels of a quasi-pornographic type. So it is easy for the reformers to scream "filth" and urge censorship as the only solution.

An article in *America*, the national Catholic weekly, points out that "if the pocket-book publishers had been more objective in their testimony before the committee, willing to admit mistakes that are obvious to everyone else, and less briskly defend every book under their imprint, we bystanders would have been much more persuaded of their realization of the responsibility that is inescapably theirs by the very fact that they are publishers." This is undoubtedly true, but it is also true that the publication of trash, however lurid, is not going to undermine American society to any devastating extent. Censorship, however, will be fatal. "I deplore the putrid state into which our newspapers have passed," said Thomas Jefferson, "and the malignity, the vulgarity, and mendacious spirit of those who write them. These ordures are rapidly depraving the public taste. It is, however, an evil for which there is no remedy. Our liberty depends on freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost."

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SPRING BOOK SECTION

Six Young Authors in Search . . .

RECENTLY there has been a good deal of interest in the "values" and beliefs of the younger generation of American writers. In *Harper's*, the *Partisan Review*, and the *Saturday Review* there have been surveys and interpretations by various critics, historians, and commentators, but the writers themselves for the most part have remained silent.

The Nation has accordingly asked six novelists whose work has attracted interest and praise in contemporary letters to state their present convictions, as individuals and as representative figures. James Jones is the author of "From Here to Eternity." William Styron is the author of "Lie Down in Darkness," for which he received a *Prix de Rome* from the American Academy. Maude Hutchins is the author of the entertaining "Diary of Love," banned in Chicago, and of "My Hero." John H. Griffin is the author of "The Devil Rides Outside," also controversial, and perhaps the most original novel in 1952. Jefferson Young is the author of the highly praised "A Good Man." Leonard Bishop is the author of "Down All Your Streets" and "Days of My Love."

Together, these writers represent a valuable cross-section of what is going on in the American novel today.

EDITORS THE NATION

Too Much Symbolism

By James Jones

Marshall, Ill.

IT'S HARD to start cold, and attempt to define what you believe or feel about anything so complex as writing or writers. The very nature of writing and writers is diversity. Any comment has to be so general.

There is a lot in our age today that is similar to the Elizabethan Age, I think. The unrest, the perpetual wars, the opening up of new scientific and spatial frontiers, the sense of living daily amid many great dangers to continued existence. Individual life is growing much cheaper in our country—just as well as the rest of the world—no matter how loud we Americans holler the opposite; and on the other side of the same coin, the hidden side, the average person is living with much greater vitality than we usually admit, simply because he is existing under such stress. All that is a lot like Elizabeth's age, I think.

But our writers today, all of us, have a common neurotic background that prevents us from seeing all this with the enthusiasm of the Elizabethans. Sometimes, by hoisting ourselves up by our own bootstraps, which is a pretty rupturing method, we are able to rise above our cheap history and unwillingness to face moral paradox and write something good. More often we don't, because our neurotic backgrounds have enervated us and we lack the vitality and moral courage of the Elizabethans to enjoy un-morality. Only when we can screw ourselves up to a great pitch of excitement or inspiration are we able to do this occasionally. But the Elizabethan writers did it all the time.

I think one of the results of this attitude of ours is that we find ourselves concerned more with symbolism than with characters. Thus instead of letting our characters write our books we let our ideas write our characters. Consequently we're in constant danger of winding up preaching—either for or against, it makes no difference. Even our critics suffer from this same malady, I think. They criticize us, not for the lifelikeness of what we write or for the memorable characters we produce, but for the symbolic meanings our writing is supposed to impart. They worry about values. We worry about values. Have writers lost their values? Has our culture lost its values? Are there any values left anywhere? Meantime, the people who don't read our books and don't know themselves to be valueless go right on living as if they valued things. If the critics ever do find a book that doesn't claim to impart symbolic meanings, they holler like hell. They won't even accept the idea, let alone the book.

I suppose the same thing is also true of any generation of writers, any given period of writers. It's probably just because I myself happen to live in *this* period that it affects me so strongly to see it. But it does affect me strongly, very strongly, and it does make me wish we could all turn to life itself, rather than to our ideas about life—which are almost always wrong anyway. In every generation of writers there are always two or three great ones and a host of lessers, and I guess in our generation too a few of us will eventually really grow up to surmount all this. But it does seem to me that it will be harder to do in our generation than in previous ones, because of the increasingly neurotic backgrounds we've had to come out of. But, again, this may just be because I'm one of this generation instead of the last one.

I think the tragedy of the American writer today is not so much that he lives in a tragic time as that he would prefer to live in another one.

But like I said, I expect some day one or two of us will eventually grow up and stop being children. I'm about convinced you can't be a big writer unless you stop being a child and first become a big man. I hope someday I'll be able to do it.

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The Prevalence of Wonders

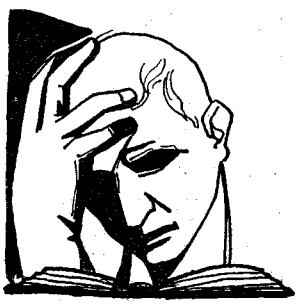
By William Styron

Rome

I HARDLY think that anyone in so short a space can do much justice to what he believes, and perhaps least of all should this be attempted by any writer, whose works, finally, should be sufficient expression of his credo. Lots of writers find themselves hopelessly baffled when it comes to dealing with ideas, and even though I suspect that this is a grave and lazy weakness, I none the less count myself among the group and, in a symposium of this sort, flounder about in a vague wonderland of notes and inconclusive jottings. But I was asked to write a "frank and honest statement of your feelings about your art, your country, and the world," so I will proceed, as frankly and as honestly as I can.

About my art: I know little of the mechanics of criticism and have been able to read only a very few critics, but I respect those people—critics and readers—who feel that the art of writing is valuable, since, like music or sailing or drinking beer, it is a pleasure, and since, at its best, it does something new to the heart. I for one would rather listen to music or go sailing, or drink beer while doing both, than talk about literature, but I am not averse to talking about it at all, just as lawyers talk about law and surgeons about surgery. And I take it quite seriously. I have no conscious illusions of myself as teacher or preacher; I do know that when I feel that I have been writing my best I am aware of having gathered together some of the actualities of myself and my experience, projected these whole and breathing on the page, and thereby have enjoyed some peculiar poetic fulfilment. This is self-indulgence; but I trust that it sometimes approaches art, a word which I'm not ashamed to use from time to time, and I trust that it might also please some reader, that person who, in my most avid self-indulgence, I am not so ingenuous as ever really to forget. So I might say that I am not interested in writing propaganda, but only in that sort of personal propaganda engendered by afternoons of vicious solitude and the weird, joyful yearning which it pleases oneself to think, just for a couple of seconds, that Bach must have felt. If out of all this, placed as vividly as I can place them in their moment in time, there are people who emerge worthy of a few moments of someone's recollection, I am satisfied. Good people and bad people—bad enough to justify the truth at every signpost in one's most awful nightmares, good enough to satisfy every editor on *Time* magazine, and so much the worse.

I would like to say something in regard to my feelings about America. I have lived in France and Italy for something over a year now—not a long time but long enough for me to feel well ahead in my postgraduate education. I have been here under a large handicap, though a handicap which, as I will try to demonstrate, might have its redeeming qualities. This handicap may be explained simply by the fact that I am one of those people who are unable to enjoy a painting, a piece of sculpture, a work of architecture, or, for that matter, practically any visually artistic representation. To suffer such a lack while in Italy is somewhat like being let loose, while suffering from ulcers, in one of those wonderful, large West Side delicatessens; yet, as Clive Bell, to whom I have run for refuge as apologist, so sympathetically points out in his essay called "The Aesthetic Hypothesis," there *are* people congenitally incapable of such an experience, just as there are people born without the sense of smell, and no more to be blamed than their equally sensitive friends who can visualize in the aerial, clear abstractions of a Vivaldi concerto, only horses galloping, nymphs and shepherds, or the first girl they ever kissed. So, deprived as I am in a place so rich in wonders as Rome of the means to assimilate those wonders, I have been thrown a bit on my own devices, so that my viewpoint, as an American living abroad, has probably often been closer to Burbank and his Baedeker among the ruins of Venice than any number of generations of comfortably adjusted artists. Many people can feel the true rapture at the façade of Chartres, and these are no doubt a step further toward an affection for France and its people than the aesthetically more limited who, attuned to the night clubs of Montparnasse or *escargots* primarily, are outraged, stricken, and resentful when it dawns upon them that the French consider them jackasses. Not all art lovers, of course, are nice people. But a warm and tolerant feeling of brotherhood for man is, I believe, often measured by the extent of one's love for man's monuments and man's



artifacts, and not a few American tourists, like myself, don't know a Piero from a peanut.

I think this blindness of mine, though, has had its worthy effects, for if it has helped to keep me from understanding the more beautiful things about Europe it has also conspired with a sort of innate and provincial aloofness in my nature to make me much more conscious of my *modern* environment, and self-consciously aware of my emotions as an American within that environment. And thus at last, after more than a year, I think that I am as "adjusted" as I ever will be, having succumbed neither to the blandishments of exile nor to any illusions of a faultless America. There cannot be much dogma about nations when one lives in One World, eighteen hours from home, and for me now things are pretty well balanced.

The "U. S. Go Home" signs no longer offend me, since I have learned that they are the work of the Communists and don't mean *me* but the American army encamped nearby. I have even come to the point where I can sympathize with the signs and ask myself: "Suppose New York were full of Swedish soldiers all mouthing orders for beer in an alien, thick, jaw-breaking tongue. Would I not want to scrawl 'Swedes go home!' on every available wall?" I have learned, too, that anti-Americanism is many different things: unjustified among the spoiled and snob-

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bish Italian upper class, with whom it's currently the vogue, and among whom was the famous actress heard at a party recently to utter the most slanderous anti-American remarks, and enplane the next day, via TWA, for New York; justified when a Parisian reads about McCarthy in *Figaro,* or when our most widely read weekly editorializes upon France and compares it to a whore; nonexistent, finally, among most Italians, whose happiest tradition has been an inability to be anti-anything and each of whom has a cousin in Brooklyn.

What I suppose I've really learned is the elderly truism that all of us can learn something from each other. That whereas our radios are better, no car from Detroit can match a fleet, shiny Alfa Romeo; that our planes work, crack up less often, and are generally on time, but that the dreadful snarl on Madison Avenue might be alleviated by a study of the marvelous Paris bus system; that, on the other hand, a bottle of Châteauneuf du Pape is ambrosia, indeed, but that there's still nothing like a Coca-Cola on a hot summer day, as every Frenchman knows but won't admit; that the man from Chicago gobbling hamburgers on the Champs Elysées is undoubtedly a fool, but there is something wonderful to be said about his brother, the July tourist with his straw hat and his lurid tie and his camera, and his almost pathetic eagerness to find, in a strange land, some kind of dazzling and miraculous enlightenment: sometimes his manners are bad but he's making the effort at least, and one finds few French tourists outside of France; that our mass production is the world's finest: "Oh," says the American, "your Italian sports cars are great, but in the states everyone can own a car." "But Signore," is the reply, "here not everyone *wants* a car"; that our Park Avenue head-feelers are the very best: "But Signore, here we do not *need* psychoanalysis." It's simply a matter of balance.

One must end a credo on the word "endure," but I think we will do just that—Americans and Italians and Frenchmen, in spite of all those who threaten us momentary harm. Humans have become involved too much in life, and the wonders are too thick about us, to be daunted by a handful of madmen who always, somehow, fall. The hope of heaven has flowered so long among us that I just can't envision that hope blighted in our time, or any other, for that matter; perhaps the miseries of our century will be recalled only as the work of a race of strange and troublous children, by the wise old men in the aeons which come after us. Meanwhile, the writers keep on writing, and I should like to think that what we write will be worth remembering.

The Lyre with One String

By Maude Hutchins

Southport, Conn.

PERHAPS the artist is the only one who is not entitled to his own opinion; what I mean by that is that I do not believe in propaganda, in a novel, political or social; or prejudice, or even opinion, in so far as they can be avoided without stress. I do not think it is the artist's business to *prove* anything at all. The artist is a professional observer, not only of things—shapes, colors, lilies, termites, trees—but of feelings, too, and what makes things work and how come Mary Jane said that, a kind of what's cooking. Unlike the doctor, more like the scientist, he leaves the conclusion to you; the scientist, nobody's keeper, weeps; it is true, when his infernal machine is morally misused, but he is not responsible.

On the other hand, I believe that each writer is trying to say one thing; one idea, perhaps, possesses him, he *is* possessed. It is as if he had been dealt a hand that he must make the most of, free to reshuffle it, but within his own parenthesis almost. The idea that he is trying to make clear to himself first, and secondly to his readers, naturally takes on a subject matter and he is stuck with it, as, let us say, a mathematician is with blocks or apples. That he doesn't *mean* blocks or apples is not always clear to the man in the trolley car. As for me, I have been accused of my theme—well, give me time, I'm stuck with it; it is

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the root in a sense, perhaps there will be branches and, who knows, blossoms maybe. No one is accusing Mr. Herzog of being preoccupied with mountains. I bet his publisher hasn't said, "Can't you write about something else?" On the other hand, perhaps he has said, "Look here, old man, try sex next time." I can't help it if the nursemaid, as I gazed at my first moon, with no subject matter in me at all, pointed out that a man and a woman were embracing in it. She was my literary sponsor in baptism, perhaps.

Unimportant as subject matter is, there has to be one. Certainly the idea is first, supported by analogy. Then, if the writer is an artist, his pages shine with beauty of phraseology and many little visions until the reader is seduced (sorry!). Nevertheless, the reader is not content. He says, "What does it mean?" The idea, so compelling to the writer, has escaped. Léon Bloy said that the first sorrow was the sorrow of not being a saint. I believe that the second is that of not being understood. But if you do not make yourself clear, do it as beautifully as possible, and in place of your little idea perhaps *the* idea, Beauty, will last longer anyway. An excited taxi driver was trying to make himself clear to me. He had just witnessed a shocking accident. It was not easy to follow his story; it was so fresh in his mind and he had not thought it out or what it meant. He ended up, "He was decapitated, in a sense." None of his violent images stayed with me, but that sentence did.

Well, I believe in enthusiasm, sentiment, hospitality, love; and I think that the artist by nature is a recluse, diffident and shy, but with a compulsion. Like Peter Rabbit, that talented rodent who tried really and truly to get away from Mr. MacGregor, but who felt all along that sneeze coming on that disclosed his whereabouts in the watering can. Well —here I am in *The Nation*.

The Buds of Ugliness

By Leonard Bishop

Paris

THE WAY I see it is this way. The first thing a writer must do before he picks up his pen for the creating of fiction, is to knock apart the fiction he has created about himself and which, in the past, has enabled him to get along. He must know himself more than others do, so that when he begins to write, the need to write comes from himself and he has familiar equipment with which to work. And after he has found an inner reality, permanent, enduring, staunch, the writer must again create a fiction about himself. He must believe somehow, through all the frailties in his discipline, all the unbridged spaces in his reasoning, that he is important. He must acquire a vanity of existence—not vanity of person—so that when he writes he never doubts that what he writes will be read and believed. To me, being a writer is not being a special guy who has been taken into an exclusive cult. Writing is my business, my job. I'm sure people will forgive me for enjoying my work. But I believe that to be a writer is a touch of noble. Not because we are special, not because we relieve the tensions of some human's mediocre existence, but because we face the terrifying brutalities needed to uproot the dignity of humanity which is so well hidden by habit, fear, bewilderment. If I seem to be fanatic, it is because I am so grateful (to whatever it is that propels us one magic day) for having found an ambition, a reason, a touch of the dream, and so much hope, because of writing. And it took me twenty-seven years of complicated, confused, bitter living to come to one simple clear sweet decision.

Now let me be a little opinionated. (What went before was nothing.) The writer today, or any artist, no matter what his medium, should not be frightened by the cultural youth of America or so fascinated by the overwhelming anciency of other countries that he must either rush to those countries or lose faith in American spirits. While the backwoods of Tennessee has produced as many ignoramuses as the township of Comitrion in France, I'm sure that as many people coming from Tennessee have integrated themselves, in time, to so-called society as have the French farmers. When I think of the States, and see what's around me here in Europe, someone ought to clout those idiots who run here for their learning. And it is not me that feels proud of America, but I hope that one day America will feel proud of me. I impose a debt on myself. That is to write, with a constant undercurrent of hope, so that in time I will explain part of America to Americans and to others.

And I know that a writer must write out of deep fruitful love for people. He must have faith, even if nothing around him justifies it at the time, that all people are born with the beginnings of good. They are corrupted along the way, but they begin good. A writer must make the fiction of a dream real, the quality of the air tastier, the streets which people walk on populated with more people and with more wisdom and with more friendship. A writer must, if this be his need, open the buds of ugliness and lay them out before others, and demonstrate how ineffectual ugliness is when it is understood. A writer must point his literary finger at the "trap" and keep shouting, "Watch out, watch out." Even if the writer is by the trap most of the time and some impulsive person he's warning pushes him into it.

Wisdom of the Child

By Jefferson Young

New Orleans

I KNOW that all the peoples of the world share a common heritage, that of humanity itself. I believe in the dignity of man, in his universal brotherhood, and that he will survive through love.

A writer, an artist, sounds a musical note and with the other members of his generation he strikes a chord in a symphony that began with the beginning of man. All the notes must be heard or the chord would be incomplete. Let us hope that the chord of my own generation will be a worthy addition to the symphony.

We must always be aware of what we know as a child: that God is love and that the birds sing.

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Withdrawal of the Artist

By John H. Griffin

Mansfield, Tex.

THE WRITER of this generation, called the Silent Generation, is faced with a peculiarly silencing situation.

He is faced with a nation and a culture so derivative and many-sided as to be without sharply defined characteristics; with a people now going through the purifying processes of crisis; with a public the statisticians wrongly label mentally pubescent.

He is faced with a vast crowd of self-styled critics, unbelievably transparent in their technics, and so shallow and self-infatuated with their critical gowns that he cannot receive the kind of help for which he has any respect except from that handful of genuine critics who are themselves, for the most part, silent.

He is faced with a commercial proposition wherein the two best-selling commodities are religion and sex, not as integrated qualities but as extreme opposites, commercialized to a point where religion is devoured in proportion to its cheapness and tawdriness, and where sex is robbed of its beauty by being couched in fake terms that achieve precisely the opposite effects of their benevolent contentions.

The result has been withdrawal. The good talents, unable to draw focus on the whole scene, have preferred to deal with only minute portions of it. And the mistake has been that they have dealt with portions lifted out of the context of humanity rather than with those portions common to all humanity. Where we need Rabelais we find only Sappho—artists too sensitive and refined to dirty their hands on the livingness of their material, afraid of the heartbeat, afraid of the warmth, afraid of the sneers of the little coteries.

But this withdrawal has much justification. It is the result of a culture wherein certain concepts of "goodness" have been so horribly exploited as to make them repugnant to some source of truth within us. Nobility has become a questionable virtue because its showiest practicants are so un-noble as to disgust us with that false light. Christianity the same. Too many of its loudest practicants are people of such utter contemptuousness as to disgust us with the source they claim to espouse.

But I believe that the artist must utilize these raw materials, not reject them. He must be dedicated enough and humble enough to choose his subject matter from the universal aspects of the human apparatus, not from its aberrations. He must, as a combination priest, physician, jester, and lover, give the people what the heart of all people claims—entertainment, insight, nourishment, the substance of affection.

And most of all, I believe that the writer today must find a legitimate way of returning such words as *nobility, loftiness, virtue, merriment, ribaldry, humility,* and *compassion* to the spiritual vocabulary of our age, this without prudery or fear, and then he will be writing for all time and quite especially for his own time.

In Defense of Folly

What evidence his wallet hides
I neither know nor care; if it's a magic
card
secreted in green sheaves of capital,
I will not hunt that witch. Parades
or trials are not for him, his hair
is wilder than his careless cowherd's
heart;
but there is traitor in him still, betrayal
of some hurt he will not share.
As witness for dissent, I'll stand
to say him innocent: he is disloyal
only to the few who tolerate
him like a straying, sad-eyed hound:
history he doubts with a bravado
howl; cornered, he growls back his
gospel
from a chain of lies. Let him go;
he is already prisoner, held incomunicado.

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BOOKS

The Literary Orphan

A Review by Maxwell Geismar

HENRY JAMES. THE UNTRIED YEARS: 1843-1870. By Leon Edel. J. B. Lippincott Company. $5.

THE SACRED FOUNT. By Henry James. With an Introductory Essay by Leon Edel. Grove Press. $4.

SINCE the death of F. O. Matthiessen, Leon Edel has been the leading James scholar in America. He has planned this full-length biography—the present volume is the first of three—for more than twenty years, and meanwhile has edited the complete plays of James and various of the novels, including "The Sacred Fount" listed above. Like Matthiessen, Edel escapes from all the irritating and boring clichés of the cult of James; from the circle of the hit-and-run specialists, or those who have clung to the coat tails of the master and established their career by the fervor of their adulation.

Edel has humor, irony, perspective. He uses the resources of biography, history, and in particular psychology, to illuminate the values and craft of James. For the temperament of "this sick and disordered creature," as James described himself during these years, did indeed help to create those precepts, canons, and codifications, those Jamesian "laws" of fiction, which in some circles have been viewed as untouchable absolutes of immaculate aesthetics. The scene of "The Untried Years" moves from Washington Square and Boston to Europe and then Newport, during the years of James's youth and literary apprenticeship—the "pure Newport time" which he looked back upon with longing and nostalgia. And the family circle was in some curious way—bright and shining and affectionate as it seemed on the surface—disordered, insecure, even diseased.

The central effort of Mr. Edel's first volume is to describe and interpret this early environment, and it is beautifully done. The father, Henry James, Sr., son of "William of Albany," suffered from a profound depression during his youth, after he had lost a leg in a fire. Being told it corresponded to a "vastation" in Swedenborgian terms, he succumbed to the mystic theosophy of the Divine Man for the rest of his life. The mother, reticent, self-sacrificing, however much the young Henry resented what he thought was a lack of attention, was actually the real support of the family; and from here, as Edel suggests, the novelist drew his first uncertain, worried view of human relationships. The woman, almost indefinable, offering nothing that could be called her own, nevertheless dominated the man; after her death Henry, Sr., had nothing to live for.

One gets the impression that they were completely bound up in each other, physically as well as spiritually—the older Henry was blunter than his son in this respect—and perhaps at the expense of the children's comfort. At least the novelist consistently viewed love as the "sacred fount" which nourished perhaps only to destroy; he was careful to avoid entanglements, or even relationships, with either men or women that might injure his own independence. I myself believe there were deeper issues involved here which Mr. Edel, at least in this volume, does not discuss fully. Henry James's involvement with both fire and the fantasy of psychic castration, at least, forms a curious parallel with the career of Stephen Crane, whose work was clearly based on the themes which James kept circling around. Meanwhile there was the famous "accident," which James proclaimed, convulsively, to the world, and which was nothing more, physically, as Edel states, than a strained back.

This was complicated by James's guilt about the Civil War, in which he did not serve, and his attempt to link his personal misfortune with the universal catastrophe. Afterward William James described his brother's ailment in terms of constipation. The parental and family situation was aggravated by the intense, if underground, rivalry between the two gifted and ambitious brothers, for whom Mr. Edel uses the parable of Jacob and Esau. Henry's health improved considerably when William was absent. And directly after Henry had scored his first literary successes in Norton's *North American Review* and Godkin's *Nation,* Vol. I, No. 1, in July, 1865, William suffered his own period of crisis and despair. This was during the central love affair of Henry's youth, if it was that, with his Albany cousin, Minny Temple. With her "splendid shifting sensibility" and her "long, light, and yet almost sliding steps," this radiant and ill-fated cousin was the source of Isabel Archer, Milly Theale, and other heroines in James's later fiction.

Brooding over her illness and death just at the start of his own rise to fame and fortune—a career which had been presaged in his early nightmare of "Art and Love, Power and Glory, Fear and Terror"—the novelist believed that her decline, too, had contributed to the increase of his talent. (This became, in different ways, the theme of both "The Portrait of a Lady" and "The Wings of the Dove.") Or at least, as Mr. Edel suggests in a brilliant passage, her death had relieved James from his "great, brooding, disastrous anxiety," and he was free to pursue the rewards of the mind. Very early he had consciously committed himself "to my particular divergence," which was not responsive to James Russell Lowell's notion of a national literature dedicated to adolescent maidens.

For the young Henry had been reading not only Dickens and Browning, but Sainte-Beuve, Mérimée, and Balzac—who was, at the other pole of American literature, Dreiser's early master, too. He had already said, "My work is my salvation," anticipating the famous later statement: "We work in the dark—we do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our task." But this was in a quite different vein—wasn't it?—from that of the later critics and disciples who

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MAXWELL GEISMAR, a contributing editor of The Nation, *is a literary historian and critic. The third volume in his series, "Rebels and Ancestors: The American Novel 1890-1915," will be published in the fall.*

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adopted his arrogance, and a certain strain of narcissistic, even infantile egoism, without his humility. On his first Roman pilgrimage, where the sense of a remote and glamorous past had completely captured the imagination of this literary and domestic orphan—whose own church, as he said, was pewless—he had admired Michelangelo, whose vigor, health, and courage marked him as a "real man of action in art."

That was the American note, not too far from William's "virile" style, to which, incidentally, Mr. Edel pays only a somewhat grudging tribute. But it was also the note of Henry James's own self-realization. The life of art to which he had dedicated himself with utter and complete passion, and which apparently had prohibited, or become a substitute for, the rich and tormented human relationships of ordinary life, was for James his single great experience. In this light "The Sacred Fount" is, if not James's own parody of that self-infatuated "observer" who endows a mediocre scene with such mystery, at least an ironic comedy of the discrepancy between reality and illusion—a comedy of errors, that is to say, in which the enchantment of art and the enigmas of existence confront each other eternally, and invincibly.

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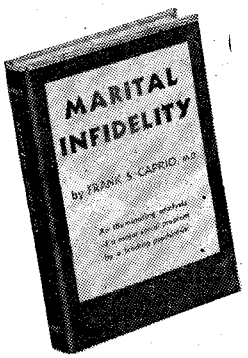

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Recent Poetry—a Miscellany

A Review by Thomas Riggs, Jr.

EUROPA AND THE BULL AND OTHER POEMS. By W. R. Rodgers. Farrar, Straus and Young. $3.

SPRING BIRTH AND OTHER POEMS. By Mark Van Doren. Henry Holt and Company. $3.

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS. New Directions. $3.75.

COLLECTED POEMS 1921-1951. By Edwin Muir. The Grove Press. $3.50.

HOELDERLIN. His Poems Translated by Michael Hamburger with a Critical Study. Pantheon Books. $3.50.

LET us start with Rodgers. He is Irish and rhetorical, and his verse is an excitement to the ear. His first volume, "Awake and Other Wartime Poems," was published over ten years ago. He works for the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the long "Easter Sequence" was written for performance on the air. Perhaps, as Stephen Spender has recently observed, his broad-brush musical exuberance is the beginning of a new popular poetry. How it does listen! There is an extraordinary poetical whoopee in the title poem, which is the best in the volume, but I doubt whether the B. B. C. would think it proper fare for all those grave British families gathered around the set. It is a strip-tease version, with verbal bumps and delays, of the intercourse of gods and men, and it has a marvelous sensual stride and motion:

> No one noticed
> The Bull and Europa sloping away
> Westward into the weed, she with both hands
> Holding her bellyful of jolted joy,
> Buoyant but dubious: he, bushed in stealth,
> Tiptoadying tenderly, picking his way
> Between brusque grass and briar, till at last
> He waded out: the slow subtracting depths
> Rose up; boldly he chinned the ruffling waves . . .

The verse is a celebrator of spectacles and, for these lush Ovidian subjects, is a real circus pleasure. When the subject matter, however, is more serious, as in the Easter sequence, the whoopee is of dubious taste, and flat imitations of Auden add to the uneasiness. Rodgers is limited in range but he has a special talent, full of delight in its proper employment.

THE TALENT of Mark Van Doren is of quite another kind, lucid, unpretentious, absolutely at home with itself, and with a wide range within surely mastered traditional forms. His mind as a poet is somewhere close to its own center and makes serene comments; paints pastorals; notes, creates, and praises. I think it is characteristic that one of his poems, in a time when the problem of evil seems overwhelming, should be called The Problem of Good, and that the angel of doubt with which tortured Jacobs wrestle should here be given welcome:

> Praise the good angel doubt,
> Guardian of us that walk
> On the deep waters of this world.
>
> Praise him. He never rests,
> However weary the way
> Over these dark, salt, dangerous meadows.
>
> Do not look down, he says;
> Beware with me and the sun
> Of faith's innumerable caverns.
>
> Monsters can be there.
> You will have plenty of time.
> Too soon descending, you are devoured.
>
> Praise him. He believes
> In the long day we are given.
> Praise him. He dances upon the whitecaps.

He is an extraordinarily prolific poet, and this collection of four years numbers more than 150 pages. His very pleasure in the traditional movements of English verse communicates itself; in the group of sonnets he sometimes plays contentedly with the conventions of the form, like a housewife happily polishing her silver spoons. In the last three sections of the book the air of naivete becomes an alert carrier for serious matters. There is a fine group here of speculative portraits of characters in the Old Testament, that most bloody book; and the late lyrics are aware of dangers but undaunted.

THE OTHER three volumes are collections: they contain what there is of a total work. The superb, strange lyrics of Dylan Thomas, the Welsh bard and young dog, are now gathered together in one volume. His poems merit all their praises, and with their collection one has the sense of a completed phase in a meteoric history, whose beginning was so striking that the imagination boggles at the thought of further reaches. The poems in this volume are developments of the original rush of energy which exploded, in 1934, upon a literary situation dominated by "social consciousness." Thomas has the bardic consciousness: he writes a personal lyric in which the sense of his own history and name is surrounded by strange lights and glooms, and if his poems are often obscure, it is that they obey nocturnal laws. His poetry exists in a world in which the sexual forces of nature, the shifting tides and currents for which the individual cannot fully account but to which the passion of his being is finally responsible, override the merely personal clamor.

Thomas's theme is struck with the first poem here collected:

> I see the boys of summer in their ruin
> Lay the gold tithings barren,
> Setting no store by harvest, freeze the soils . . .

And the development of the book, in its compact metaphorical compression, takes the boys of summer to the point at which the summer leaves them. Despite such fine occasional poems as A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London, these poems are inward hymns to an indwelling vitality—rich with juices, corrupt with various experience, laying claim to an absolute kinship with urges beyond rational definition. It is tempting to see the volume as a progression from the boys of summer to the old ram rod of the superbly bawdy and unforgettable Lament, who goes through the weathers of the body until the weather of the spirit lasts him out:

THOMAS RIGGS, JR., is an assistant professor of English at Princeton University, and a member of the Creative Writing Program. He has published a number of poems, and various articles and reviews on contemporary British and American literature.

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When I was half of the man I was
And serve me right as the preachers warn,
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of down-
fall),
No flailing calf or cat in a flame
Or hickory bull in milky grass
But a black sheep with a crumpled horn,
At last the soul from the foul mousehole
Slunk pouting out when the limp time
came,
And I gave my soul a blind, slashed eye,
Gristle and rind, and a roarer's life,
And I shoved it into the coal-black sky
To find a woman's soul for a wife.

In a characteristic note to this edition Thomas says what his poems are about. "I read somewhere of a shepherd who, when asked why he made, from within fairy rings, ritual observances to the moon to protect his flocks, replied: 'I'd be a damn fool if I didn't.' These poems, with all their crudities, doubts, and confusions, are written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn fool if they weren't." This is both bardic and doggish. It echoes the advice of Thomas's distinguished predecessor, Edeyrn the Golden Tongued, who, compiling the rules of Welsh court poetry in the thirteenth century, established that it is the province of the strolling minstrel to deprecate and shame but the province of the poet to celebrate and give praise.

THE "Collected Poems" of Edwin Muir contain the choice of thirty years. Like Mark Van Doren, Muir is a poet without braggadocio. On the strength of this volume I would consider him unexcelled among living English poets. He has gone his own way, unmarked by the fads and manifestoes of the century. Suddenly, as with Hardy and Robert Graves, here he is; and has been all along, a fact of the landscape.

Muir's poetry is lacking in bravura of the surface but abounds in fine excesses. Here, for example, is the opening of Ulysses:

The doors flapped open in Ulysses' house,
The lolling latches gave to every hand,
Let traitor, babbler, tout and bargainer in.
The rooms and passages resounded
With ease and chaos of a public market,
The walls mere walls to lean on as you
talked,
Spat on the floor, surveyed some new-
comer
With an absent eye. *There you could be yourself.*

The italics are mine, not Muir's; but I know no other way to point at a phrase so quietly remarkable as this. These are the best words in the best possible order: the words are not exotic nor the order complex, but mastery is there.

Like the poems of Yeats, Muir's poems need one another, and perhaps one could not gather a full sense of the richness and penetration of this remarkable mind from a smaller selection than this. Poem echoes poem, symbols gather substance and luminosity, until one becomes aware that the whole work, as it is in a different way for Eliot, is the chronicle, with no signs of the exhaustion of a vein, of a deep affair with time. For Muir time is not, as it is for Pater's children, a discontinuous process, a series of discrete moments each one

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of which is hectically responsible for the quality of life. The time of these poems is of complex dimensions. It is a river, a flow, through the channels of the individual life, and links the landscape of the Orkney childhood with the imagined landscape of age, as in the marvelous The Return. This is the common time of the poets, tragic and irreversible. But time is also the opening of the ego into myth; animals and landscapes become heraldic matters and not mere decorative backdrops for the human action. Muir's sense of myth has little to do with the modern pedantry of myth. Like Hardy's, it is a way of communion with the past:

> Archaic fevers shake
> Our healthy flesh and blood
> Plump in the passing day . . .

And time is also circled with eternity, within which time is transfigured: the "tormented wood" of the cross

> Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree
> In a green springing corner of young Eden,
> And Judas damned take his long journey backward
> From darkness into light and be a child
> Beside his mother's knee, and the betrayal
> Be quite undone and never more be done.

IT REMAINS to note with more than welcome the revised edition of Michael Hamburger's text and English translation of the great German romantic poet Hölderlin. Hölderlin was born in 1770, in the same year as Wordsworth and Beethoven, and died in 1843, but his poems have waited until this century for full recognition. The tragic and moving story of his life has become legend, and this has perhaps interfered with an appreciation of that lucid genius which shone beyond his madness. He was a brilliant philosopher and classical scholar, and, like many of the luminaries of the Enlightenment, a belated Greek. All the poetry which remains was written before the end of his thirty-sixth year. Then the schizophrenia which had always dogged him took sway, and for another thirty-six years he remained in the isolation of that "inner vision" with which Jung speaks of the schizophrenic state. His poetry moves from statements of philosophical idealism to the concise and tragic self-knowledge of his final creative phase:

> Mit gelben Birnen hänget
> Und voll mit wilden Rosen
> Das Land in den See,
> Ihr holden Schwäne,
> Und trunken mit Küssen
> Tunkt ihr das Haupt
> Ins heilignüchterne Wasser.
>
> Weh mir, wo nehm' ich, wenn
> Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
> Den Sonnenschein
> Und Schatten der Erde?
> Die Mauern stehn
> Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
> Klirren die Fahnen.

(With yellow pears the land, And full of wild roses, Hangs down into the lake, O graceful swans, And drunk with kisses, You dip your heads Into the hallowed-sober waters. Alas, where shall I find when Winter comes, flowers, and where Sunshine, And the shadows of earth? The walls stand Speechless and cold, in the wind Weathercocks clatter.)

The last half of Hölderlin's life was almost silence, in the Tübingen tower in which he took refuge. He wrote endlessly, but the bulk of the papers of his madness have not been preserved. "No one is harming me," he would often say, and once among his papers a visitor found written: "Only now do I understand human beings, since I have been living far from them and in solitude."

Experts and Policy

A Review by Robert Lekachman

ECONOMICS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE. By Edwin G. Nourse. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $6.

THIS book is the story of the President's Council of Economic Advisers by its first chairman. It is scarcely a record of success. Mr. Truman apparently wanted to use the council as advocates of his economic policies before Congress and the nation. When he encountered Nourse's opposition, he took to ignoring the council and its recommendations. As time went on, Leon Keyserling dissented more and more from Nourse's conception of the council as separate from politics, and eventually this difference of opinion became so acute and the President showed such a growing preference for Keyserling that Nourse felt called upon to resign. Nourse confesses that he was never able to establish intellectual contact with Mr. Truman: the Economic Reports represented compromises within the council and between the council and the President's aides, and he was defeated in his effort to secure Congressional support and cooperation. The low estate to which the council has now fallen and the doubts which surround its future contrast unhappily with the high hopes expressed by Congressional supporters of the Employment Act of 1946.

There were two major reasons for the council's failure. The first, explicit in this book, was the uncertainty about its purpose and functions. Should the council anonymously advise the President in the light of the best that economics offers, issue no papers of its own, and testify before no Congressional committees, or should it attempt a job of public and Congressional education designed to explain and to increase the role of economics in the determination of public policies? There are dangers in both courses. An anonymous council might have little influence. On the other hand, a council actively engaged in propaganda would soon destroy confidence in its economics. It cannot be said that Mr. Nourse resolves his dilemma.

A second reason is found in the current condition of economics. It is plain to me that economic analysis offers no clear-cut advice on many issues of current policy and that the advice economists give is compounded of their political and social views as well as their economic reasoning. This is a much-disputed point among economists, and in fairness it should be said that many economists believe that ethical and political neutrality is consonant with policy recommendation. If my point is well taken, then politics cannot be separated from economic policy and the Council of Economic Advisers cannot hope to be a group of technicians above the battle.

Although Mr. Nourse's book is important, it is unfortunately not good. It is repetitious, it takes hundreds of pages to

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pose its central issues, and its language is marred by its author's evidently compulsive love of the cliché. Nevertheless, anyone interested in the difficult question of how expert services can be used to influence political decisions, should read this book, even if he may judiciously skip a good portion of it.

New Books in Brief

Adventures of the Pilgrims

THE PILGRIM READER. By George F. Willison. Doubleday. $5.95. It is a pleasure to report that Mr. Willison, who some years ago gave us an entertaining and well-balanced account of the Pilgrim Fathers in "Saints and Strangers," has returned to Plymouth after an excursion to Virginia, "The Fifth Crown." In this new book he presents in the words of the Pilgrims, or their contemporaries, a narrative of their adventures from their secret gatherings at Scrooby to the absorption of the Old Colony by Massachusetts in 1692, intruding himself only to supply connecting passages and notes. The result is a revealing collective portrait of very human men and women, no more immune to the weaknesses of the flesh and the wiles of the devil than their descendants, but inspired by a passion for freedom to undertake incredible hardships and dangers. The realities of their saga are so much more instructive than the thick growth of pious myth that surrounds their graves that we should be very grateful to Mr. Willison for resurrecting them in this unvarnished manner.

Birth of Israel

STATE IN THE MAKING. By David Horowitz. Translated from the Hebrew by Julian Meltzer. Knopf. $4.50. This is a revealing behind-the-scenes account of some of the exciting diplomatic negotiations, 1945-48, leading up to the establishment of Israel. Mr. Horowitz, a Polish-born economist who later became director general of the Israel Ministry of Finance, was a key figure in presenting the Zionist case before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry of 1946 and its successor, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, in 1947. He also served as the Jewish Agency liaison with the eleven-man U. N. committee which ultimately returned to Lake Success with a majority report favoring partition.

Horowitz and his colleagues, including Moshe Shertok (later Foreign Minister Sharett), Nahum Goldmann, Arthur Lourie and others, shuttled between Jerusalem, Geneva, London, Washington, New York, and Lake Success—a small group of men burning with a mission to explain, persuade, and prove their case before the international juries that were to decide the future of the Jewish National Home. His story touches on illegal immigration, the internment of Jewish leaders at Latrun, the hanging of Jewish dissidents, the blowing-up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, and the extraordinary forty-eight hours preceding the adoption of the partition resolution by the General Assembly. It is all told easily, with interesting sidelights on such personalities as Ernest Bevin, Chaim Weizmann, Harold Beeley, Ralph Bunche, Richard Crossman, Bartley Crum, and others who figured in the birth of Israel.

On Doing Time

INSIDE. By Helen Bryan. Houghton Mifflin. $3. The impact of this book is out of all proportion to its content. With a world in conflict, why should the story of imprisonment of a woman in the model Federal Prison for Women, Alderson, West Virginia, move us so deeply? The writer is fifty-one, college educated, former secretary of the Fund to Aid Spanish Refugees. Summoned before the Un-American Activities Committee of Congress, she refused to reveal the names of subscribers. She was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for contempt.

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panions. She tells them with rare literary skill and a still rarer compassion.

Of crude physical suffering there is nothing. This is not the story of the brutality and mismanagement which cause prison riots; it is a quiet story but breathlessly disquieting. Why? Because it speaks for all those who have lost their freedom. It shows how *doing time* distorts the meaning of time. The author is filled with wonder at the vast reaches of the human spirit in pain, and she possesses reverence for life. She is sensitive to the curious psychological effect of imprisonment. For these reasons "Inside" is a must for people who care.

Happy Marriage

TWO LIVES. By Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Simon and Schuster. $5. Subtitled "The Story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself," this is a record of two lives interwoven through marriage and through the sustained interest of each in the other's successful career. Mrs. Mitchell is best known for her work as chairman of the Bureau of Educational Experiments and for her books by and about children. Her husband, who died in 1948, was an outstanding economist and for a quarter-century Director of Research of the National Bureau of Economic Research. The book is too long; not in the narrative itself but in the voluminous extracts from letters, lectures, and published works, but it gives a buoyant and interesting picture of two lives of unusual happiness and fulfilment. As is usual in autobiographies, the most vivid and readable passages are those covering the author's childhood. The lack of an index is especially deplorable in view of the number of interesting people with whom the Mitchells came in contact.

Goya's Mind and Method

GOYA'S CAPRICHOS. BEAUTY, REASON, AND CARICATURE. By José López-Rey. Two Volumes. Princeton. $12.50. An exhaustive analysis of one of Goya's major achievements, this work richly rewards the reader's sustained attention. Fortunately the 265 plates, excellent in quality, are bound separately, and one is spared the discomfort of constantly turning the pages to follow the elaborate illustration of López-Rey's commentary. The plates include a full array of Goya's magnificent preparatory drawings and much related material, including a number of the illustrations for Lavater's "Physiognomy," from which Goya seems to have drawn many suggestions for caricature. The plates of the Caprichos themselves reproduce a copy owned by Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hofer which is remarkable because the impressions were pulled by Goya himself; the Caprichos have been too generally known from editions published well after Goya's death and after the plates had been badly reworked by other hands. While this book was written for specialists, the matter it considers is of such tremendous impact and is treated with such clarity and directness that it can be recommended to anyone willing to make an effort to learn about Goya's mind and his method of procedure.

Sainted Rascal

ZORBA THE GREEK. By Nikos Kazantzakis. Translated from the Greek and with Notes by Carl Wildman. Simon and Schuster. $3.50. Nikos Kazantzakis, the Italo Svevo of Greece, has reached American readers late in his career: he was born in 1885 and has been writing for over forty years. The vast novel his publishers have chosen as an introduction seems particularly suitable, since the protagonist, a figure not unlike the author in cultural background and interests, is as virgin to the more parochial Greek customs as we are ourselves.

This is the story of a well-to-do young man who inherits a lignite mine on the shores of Crete. Thither he repairs with his unfinished work on Buddha and his foreman, Buddha's antithesis, the flesh-and-blood child of Zeus, Zorba the Greek. Zorba is a wonderfully moving, loving tribute by his creator to the vigor and poetry of the Greek people. He belongs in the national gallery of sainted rascals.

The books meanders; it accepts on a grand scale the reader's willingness to explore superstition, hope, inanition, action, love, venality, and finally death and decay. There are hilarious and ribald high points, of course, one of the best being the fantastic chapters on the monastery in the hills to which Zorba and his "boss" have gone for their own reasons. Not since Rabelais have the good brothers been treated to such a dressing down; it will shock many but cannot fail to delight and amuse a goodly few. Add the fact that the whole long tale is superbly written and so well translated that one is unaware it is a translation.

Brittany Magic

WEDDING DANCE. By Anne de Tourville. Translated from the French by Mervyn Savill. Farrar, Straus and Young. $3. Some of the witchery of the Brittany about which she writes has been snared by Miss de Tourville, which helps to prove she is an uncommonly gifted author. One hopes to see more of her work in English. The present novel, a short love story, is a magical infusion of folklore, peasant reality, and poetic insight brought to small perfection by language of such loveliness as to have mesmerized at least one grateful reader.

In terms of craftsmanship, the author's most unusual achievement is probably her creative use of both nature and myth. Pre-Christian religious beliefs and ceremonies, in more or less adapted forms, survive in Brittany with surprising strength. Never vulgarized simply to supply local color, they are used in this book to illumine the inner workings of the characters and the external influences that bear on them. All of this stems from sound anthropology, but it is particularly suggestive when presented in poetic rather than documentary fashion. Love, hate, greed, envy are more than the personal motivations of the characters; they flow from mysterious and remote forces, present to the consciousness of the people, who move in response to their ancient and more powerful meanings. In this world, the elements again tremble on the verge of becoming incarnate.

Novel of Sicily

THE HOUSE BY THE MEDLAR TREE. By Giovanni Verga. Translated from the Italian by Eric Mosbacher. Grove Press. $3.50. Verga's finest novel of Sicily, first published over seventy years ago, has at last reached us in an English version that stresses the many modern devices characteristic of the author's narrative style. Repetition of

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catch phrases in dialogue is one of them; evocative use of an object—the silk handkerchiefs of the young girls, or the medlar tree itself—like a drumbeat in his prose, is another. This minute study of Sicilian life as exemplified in the destinies of one family, the Malavoglia, is written with a realism and compelling immediacy that we associate with the work of later writers.

At the head of the Malavoglia family is the grandfather, Mastro 'Ntoni, a fisherman who owns his own boat and hence does not hire himself out to others. The other members are his son, the son's wife, and their five children, three boys and two girls. The story is the recital of what happens when, through a misfortune at sea, the son is lost and the slow disintegration of the family begins. But beyond the harsh fate of the Malavoglia, Verga gives us a veristic study of the village of Aci Trezza and the villagers' subjugation to the implacable sea.

American readers will remember that the popular "Cavalleria rusticana" is based on a Verga story. Other Verga material—short stories and some travel notes—were translated by D. H. Lawrence, who gave Verga his rightful place as "surely the greatest writer of Italian fiction."

Love, Luxury, and Politics

THE ANGRY ANGEL. By Lajos Zilahy. Translated from the Hungarian by Thomas L. Harsner. Prentice-Hall. $3.95. Lajos Zilahy has been popular in Europe for over a generation as a novelist whose skill, craftsmanship, and familiarity with the milieu he recreates put him far above the merely slick writer. Unfortunately, as with Simenon until fairly recently, so marked is Zilahy's facility that some of his other qualities have gone by the board: he is a considerable commentator on the world we live in.

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Theater

Harold Clurman

IN "An Experience of Critics," a thoroughly amiable but rather useless little volume which the Oxford University Press has just published, Christopher Fry sweetly says, "No man in his senses expects a critic always to be right—indeed it would be very disconcerting if he were: we should have to believe him, and the knowledge of his fallibility is often a great comfort." Bravo! But what "man" is Fry speaking about? The general reader or the person whose work is being criticized? And how can anyone determine whether or not a critic is right? What makes him "right"? What is "right"?

Every year or so, I decide never to utter another word about dramatic criticism, because it seems to me that whatever has to be said on the subject has already been said, and is surely known. But one inevitably returns to the subject not only because, as Goethe once remarked, "everything has been said, but since no one listens one must always begin again," but because dramatic criticism more perhaps than any other is everywhere a source of irritation.

"The dramatic critics are ignoramuses," says the theater worker, but he keeps on reading them, quoting them, appeasing them, defending himself against them, cursing them, and praying for good notices. Clarity on the subject never seems to be arrived at, and when at last the theater worker thinks he has achieved calm, he finds himself at some point once again caught in a spasm of exasperation over what "that idiot X" just said about his play or performances.

What causes and perpetuates this confusion? Not, I think, intellectual fuzziness so much as economic fear and the neuroses attendant upon it, which are no longer purely economic. At a party recently I encountered three people whose work I had reviewed. The actress whose virtues I had sung was effusively cordial (she had never met me before), a friend of mine—usually demonstratively affectionate—whose work I had praised with a slight demur greeted me with lukewarm courtesy, and another genial soul who felt I had been harsh—not to say "unfair"—grew pale with the strain of self-control. In all three cases, be it noted, the shows these people were involved in are great successes, and nothing I could say could in any way jeopardize their careers.

REVIEWS are an important factor in the making of commercial success in the theater today. Hence the reviewer's notice is feared. This fear makes it virtually impossible for the person engaged in a stage production to read a notice as *criticism*. It also makes the writing of criticism difficult. Perhaps the French critic who said that criticism of contemporaries is not so much criticism as conversation was right; and one can write true criticism only of artists who are far away or dead! For criticism, it must never be forgotten, has very little to do with "knocks" or "boosts," "pans" or "raves."

Beyond the economic concern which constitutes the root of the trouble—particularly in New York—and the natural desire of all people to be loved and admired, there is a terrible lack of self-confidence among our theater artists. They live in an environment which provides few established standards, traditions, or a secure basis for development. The artist among us does not educate his public, and the public never learns what it is supposed to demand from or give the artist except applause or indifference.

In such an atmosphere the artist, already terrorized by economic pressure and worry over a repute which seems to be won chiefly through affluence, is shaken in his judgment and spirit. He becomes dispossessed of himself. He seems somehow uncertain even in that of which he is supposed to be a master. When the theater man cries "Fool!" at the critic, it is as much a sign that he thinks the critic may be right as an epithet of contemptuous superiority. While the critic is usually sure as to whether or not he likes a play, the theater artist often behaves as if he himself had no idea of what he set out to do. He is a man of talent without a sounding board within himself.

The critic writes for the audience rather than for the artist. Theater folk, particularly actors, might do well not to read reviews of plays in which they are involved. The artist learns about his own work from a few other artists with whom he is in close contact and from a very limited number of people he trusts—hardly any of whom are ever critics. Sometimes he learns over the years from the audience *en masse*. The critic, in so far as he is a critic and not a private publicity or ticket agent for his newspaper, writes subjectively, but if he is a sound critic he will be sufficiently clear about himself to objectify his tastes, thoughts, prejudices. When the critic does this, the reader is enabled to measure the difference between the critic who judges and the thing judged. When in his review of a play, Bernard Shaw suggests his own attitude toward life and the drama, his reader may not only appreciate the Shavian philosophy but through it come to understand more fully the nature of the play being reviewed. That is one reason why, though we are no longer able to see most of the plays Shaw wrote about, we are still able to enjoy his criticism of them.

THE CRITIC is hardly to be valued by the degree of his "rightness" or "wrongness" on particular plays. There is no such thing. The critic is valuable only in so far as he is interesting and illuminating on his subject; when he helps us see or realize something about the play which has some significance for us independent of his conclusion as to its "goodness" or "badness." In fact, I believe the critic should avoid, as much as possible, most labels of merit ("great," "fair," "moderately amusing," "a play you must see," etc., etc.) and concentrate on the moral, intellectual, emotional analysis of the ingredients which compose the play or performance he is judging. In this way the critic will help the reader understand something important about the play and stimulate him to judge more knowingly for himself.

The essential function of the theater critic is not to blame or to praise, but to see, to describe, to clarify, to spread understanding and, if possible, knowl-

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edge. If the critic does this, he will be stimulating even when we think him "wrong." (One of the most brilliant and enlightening criticisms I ever heard was a violent attack on Renoir's painting, which I love!) The critic is not to be regarded as a burden or a competitor to the artist, but as an adjunct, someone by the artist's side, in a very real sense cooperating with the artist for the benefit of the community of which both artist and critic are a part.

The critic, like the artist, must be humble and also proud of his task, ready to learn and ready to defend his work. I know there have been some rare reviews that have outlived the plays they were about, but I am often very much inclined to tell my readers that the poorest play is worth more than the best reviews, and that they should go to the theater as frequently as possible with alert mind and open senses, regardless of what any of us (critics) say. Above all, the playgoer should not imitate the reviewers' most uncreative aspect and deadly fault, which is to think of plays as "hits" or "flops."

Records

B. H. Haggin

IT WAS TOSCANINI who gave the public of my time as a concertgoer —which began somewhere around 1915 —its first hearings of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis in 1934; and his performances of it since then have been the ones that have established in my mind the shape of the work for me, as his performances have established in my mind the shape and meaning of Beethoven's Ninth. They have done this because, for one thing, of the unique "feeling for continuity and coherence [that] finds tempos which integrate the many sections . . . into a progression from one dazzling sublimity to the next." Nobody else has achieved this with the finale of the Ninth, which I was writing about in the preceding quotation; and the achievement in the Missa is even more remarkable and impressive because of its enormously greater scale. Also, Beethoven's sustained intensity in those sublimities in the finale of the Ninth becomes in the longer stretches of the Missa almost unbearable; and one of the most remarkable achievements of Toscanini's performance is to make it bearable. To which I must add that a no less remarkable achievement is the treatment of some of the quiet pages of the work that are for me the most wonderful of all—the mystically introspective opening sections of the Sanctus and the Benedictus, the radiant Allegretto section of the Agnus Dei.

Concerning the recent broadcast performance there remains only to say that the playing of the NBC Symphony and the singing of the Robert Shaw Chorale were superb; but that the four solo voices were not well matched, and that while those of Eugene Conley and Jerome Hines were very beautiful, Nan Merriman's was threadbare, and Lois Marshall's—amazing in the assured way it climbed to any height and kept going at any length—lacked the sensuous loveliness one wants to hear in a soprano.

In Janacek's Slavonic Mass one hears extraordinarily powerful writing in a highly individual language and style. Brestislav Bakala conducts the excellent Moravian Mixed Chorus, Brno Radio Symphony, and Frantisek Michalek, organist, in a performance that is impressive even wtih the tremulous singing of the unidentified soloists (Urania).

The RCA recording of Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" offers ear-ravishing singing by Victoria de los Angeles (Rosina), beautiful singing and phrasing by Nicola Monti (Almaviva), Nicolo Rossi-Lemeni's singing of *La calumnia* as part of an amusing characterization (Don Basilio), and Gino Becchi's blatant extravagances in *Largo al factotum* (Figaro). With these soloists Serafin conducts the Milan Symphony and Chorus effectively. E. J. Dent's English version is too remote from the Italian text to be of practical use in following it.

Victor also has issued in its Treasury series a performance of Verdi's "The Masked Ball" in which Caniglia (Amelia), Gigli (Riccardo), and Becchi (Renato) sing better than in the "Aida" that presumably was recorded later. That is, Caniglia's singing in her arias is less explosive, more legato, and quite beautiful except for some strident high notes and occasional sagging pitch; Gigli, though he sobs through the later scenes, is content to sing with beauty of voice and engaging musical style in the first two; and Becchi too sings with restraint. In addition there are Barbieri (Ulrica), with a tremolo that isn't excessive, and Elda Ribetti (Oscar), with a soprano voice that I find unpleasant. With them Serafin conducts the orchestra and chorus of the Rome Opera. The dubbed sound becomes distorted near the ends of sides —worst of all in the beautiful second-act music on side 2. A good combination of translation and summary is provided with the Italian text.

• The Crossword Puzzle was unavoidably omitted from this issue.

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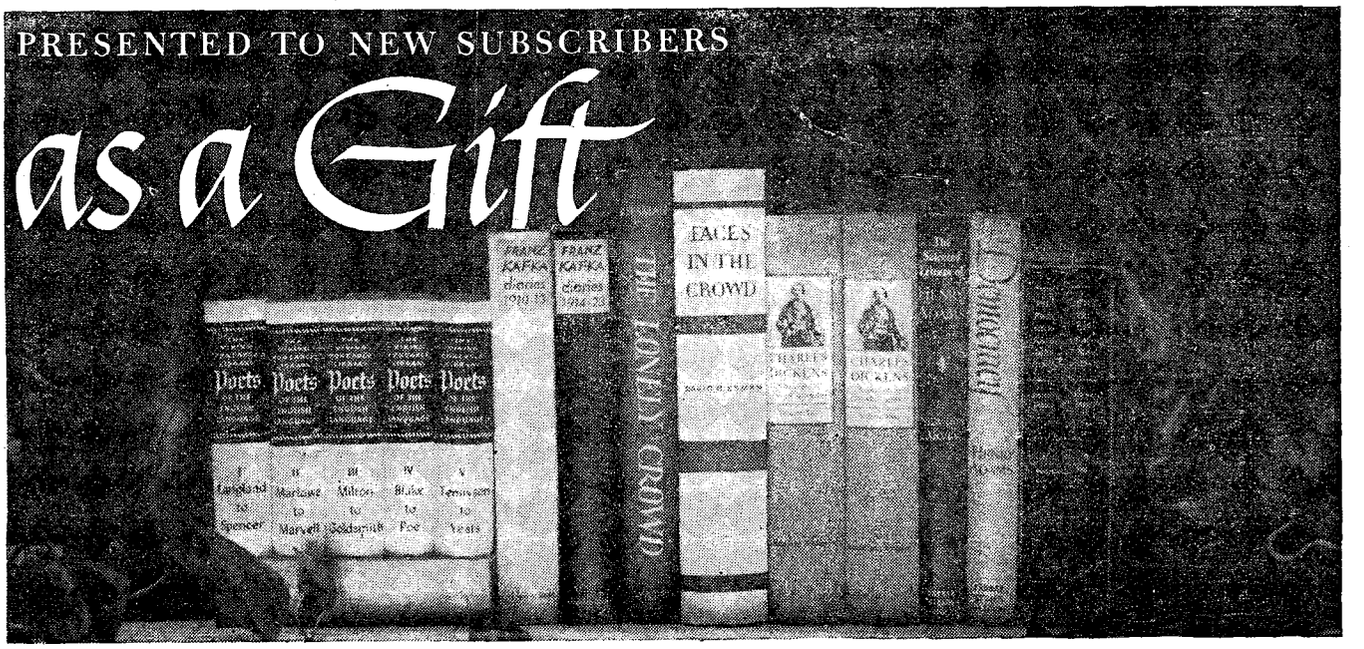

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